

一色一凜
Illustration by fame

暴食の ベルセルク

Berserk of Gluttony

俺だけレベルという概念を突破する

III

Berserk of Gluttony

– The One That Exceeds The Concept Of Levels –

- Volume 3 -

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「グリードつ！」

機天使を喰らったことで得ることができた
第三位階——黒盾を今こそ。

形状を変えて、迫り来る咆哮と衝突する。

信じられないほど、重圧が黒盾を持つ両腕から伝って、
両足までにのしかかる。

ほんの少しだけ後ろへ押されてしまふが、
なんとか持ちこたえられそうだ。

黒盾に衝突した咆哮は、
虹色の光になって、段々と拡散されている。



「ムクロさんは王都に行つたことはありますか？」

俺はロキシー様を追って
王都からガリアに来たのだから、
正直に答えれば、あるだ。

この先の話でどう転ぶかわからないので避けておいた
ほうがいいのか、それともまた嘘を吐くのか。
いろいろと考えた末、
王都にいたことくらいは話してもいいだろうと思った。

「あるよ」

「そうなんですか！ でしたら、
商業区にあるエンカウンターという
酒場を知っていますか？
こぢんまりとしていますが、
とても温かみのあるところなんですよ
うつ……この酒場は俺がロキシー様を
連れて行った場所だ。

あの時は民の暮らしを知りたいと言うので、
行きつけの酒場を紹介したのだ。

俺が静かに頷くと、
ロキシー様は嬉しそうに話を続ける。

Chapter 54

Reunion with the White Holy Knight

I donned the skull mask after parting with Myne, then headed northward, towards the fortress city Babylon.

The sun was starting to go down. I wanted to at least reach the city before sunset.

I don't know if it's a wish come true, but I returned to the border between the Kingdom and Gallia without encountering any monster stampedes along the way.

Over that point is the kingdom... the soil wasn't desolated. Flowers and other plants could be seen growing on the ground, swaying on the wind.

And it's still Gallia where I stood. The air reeked of blood and the ground was dry and cracked. One could even say that this was the country of death.

As I stepped away from Gallia, the fresh air of Kingdom entered my lungs. As I thought, this feeling is a little bit unsettling.

When I had stepped into Gallia back then, it was like I was passing through the border to another world. The difference was uncanny.

Perhaps like that machine angel which I fought against with Myne, this was probably also due to the influence of ancient Gallian technology.

Well, even after 4000 years since its destruction, the exact location of the Gallian kingdom was never found, I don't understand why.

But anyways, here is the fortress city Babylon. My stomach is empty, so let's hurry.

Oh~, look at that, a city surrounded by tall walls. It is said that this wall serves as some sort of a embankment to prevent the monsters in Gallia from flooding in. Therefore, they spent so much on it that it now almost reaches the sky. It's really colossal in height.

The wall surrounded the circumference of the city in a circular shape.

I approached and gently touched it. It's made of some kind of metal... or alloy, to be exact. Certainly not iron.

It's a tough alloy that won't bend or crack easily upon being attacked by monster.

"Hey, Greed. This looks pretty hard. I don't think even you can cut through it, eh?"

[Ha!? Even though it's made of adamantite, it'll still be no match for me. Why do you want to cut it anyways?]

"No, let's stop now."

Hee~. So according to Greed, this outer wall is made of an alloy called adamantite.

For thousands of years, these walls have prevented the monsters in Gallia from breaking in, so the durability is on a whole other level than other metal or alloys.

Also, the method to refine it has been lost; it is said to be made from various things found in Gallia.

"Do you know about anything regarding this city by any chance?"

[Fuhn, this fortress city is a memorable place for me. But it was from a long time ago.]

"Hee~, it's alright. You can tell me if you want, or is it a no?"

[You already know the answer, don't you? Besides, it's not that interesting to hear about.]

Perhaps Greed was involved during the early days of this city when it began its construction.

However, Greed was a weapon. Unless he had another wielder at that time, how could he be involved with the construction of this city?

I guess it's okay with that line of thought. Another wielder of Greed... it's almost impossible for me to think that someone could handle Greed without having a mortal

sin skill like mine. After all, Greed likes to take away most, if not all, of my stats when I need him to do something.

Greed cannot be handled by an ordinary person. Even the stats of a holy knight would soon get dried up.

Maybe, there was someone who had a similar skill like I do in the past.

“Hey, Greed. I wonder, did you have a previous user?”

[What's the matter? So sudden]

“About that, can you tell me?”

Greed never really lied to me. Just a little in a very rare times,

[...it was]

“That person, what happened?”

[Dead. Leaving me all alone. Well, that's in the past, nothing I can do about it]

Of course. Otherwise, Greed wouldn't be in my possession now.

[I thought that I'd ever meet another one, but I actually did]

“One who has Gluttony skill?”

[That's how it is. Now, don't just loaf around, get in quickly.]

Did you just remember the old days and got shy because of it? But that's it, Greed didn't tell me anything else.

Now then, where was the entrance of this fortress city?

Normally speaking, it should be at the north part which is the opposite of Gallia. Otherwise, when a large scale stampede appeared, there will be a chance that the gate will collapse and allow the monsters to get in.

I walked along the wall, until finally, the gate I'd been searching for became visible. As expected, it's in the north part of the city.

Awesome... it's made to fit large amount of advancing soldiers.

The front gate was open right now. Many people were going in and out. Warriors and merchants, a lot of carriages carrying ladies in fancy clothes also. I saw a carriage that belonged to the military. I noticed the emblem of King's army on it.

Were they carrying people and food from the countryside? There seemed to be a lot of people trying to make money here. Most of the people in that carriage had faces full of expectation on them.

Because I'll be living here too, I for one can understand how they feel. The more money you have, the better. Then there would be nothing to worry about.

So then, let's go through the gate now... when I thought to do that, I heard the noise of hooves from a large amount of horses from behind me.

About 100 or so of them.

I turned around and... aaahhhh

It's the army from the kingdom. That white rose coat of arms is exactly like the Heart family crest.

Just like me, people who noticed quickly moved aside to make way. It's the knight who would be the new lord of the fortress city after all.

I stared under the cover of my skull mask, looking for her. Where... where was she!?

The soldiers had started to pass through the gate. I still couldn't find Roxy among them. Holding off my wish to see her early, I grasped the black sword on my waist tightly.

Greed told me off through the **[mind reading]**.

[You're impatient. Calm down!]

“Shut up”

I know that. Even if I want to, I just can't calm myself down.

Then Greed told me.

[This sign... found her. She's a little towards the back]

“At the back... oh!?”

I guess I acted like a stupid person just now.

As Greed said, I looked to the back of the marching soldiers, and I saw her riding on a white horse.



Wrapped in white armor that made her blonde hair shine even more, Roxy waved at those who welcomed the arrival.

She always has that dazzling face. Even more so now than when I last saw her back in the kingdom.

The air around her is different somewhat.

Perhaps, something happened before she arrived at the fortress city Babylon. That is, Roxy felt even more like a holy knight.

To the extent that it feels like she had grown distant... I think.

Greed told me while I was still in daze.

[Fate, are you not gonna wave your hand?]

“Don’t say such an unreasonable thing”

Roxy rode past me on her white horse. At that time, her blue eyes momentarily glanced at me.

However, the white horse kept walking forward.

I was worried that I’d been noticed for a moment there, but it wasn’t the case. This skull mask had a function of inhibiting recognition. As long as I wore it, Roxy won’t recognize me as Fate Graphite.

If I could, I would’ve already...

Roxy finally went through the gate. This is the distance between me and her. We can no longer do things together like we used to. We’ve gone our separate ways.

A row of soldiers still continued in behind her. From their face, and their body language, I can tell that all of them were trained soldiers. I don’t have any complaints.

With the presence of the head of the Heart family that is renowned all across the kingdom, it seems the soldiers’ morale had been raised by a notch.

It took a while until all the soldiers finally entered the city. Thanks to that I was left standing here, and by the time I noticed, the sky had already become a starry night.

Well it's alright. I got to see Roxy's energetic face.

Now then, this will be the city where I live from on. First of all I need to find a lodging. How about an inn... one with delicious meals, and hopefully not very costly.

Chapter 55

This is the Beginning

The fortress city Babylon was divided into 3 districts.

The military district was located in the upper half of the circle-shaped city. This was where Roxy's army was stationed at. Apparently, there were also hired mercenaries among them.

'Mercenary' referred to those that were stronger than regular warriors. Most of them were born from Holy Knight families, but never acquired the required Holy skill to become a Holy Knight.

Most, if not all of these men held some resentment toward the Holy Knights. Then why did these people even get hired? Of course, it's because when it came to Gallia, they'll need all the help they can muster.

If you can fight, then such obstacles will be overlooked. That was the way of the fortress city Babylon.

That said, if you were strong, even if you were just a regular warrior, you would be allowed to go here. Even if you had a bad attitude, nobody would complain if you can kill monsters. You would still be rewarded accordingly.

About Roxy, I wonder if she'd be fine with it... she had that strong sense of righteousness in her after all.

As for me, I'll be just fine. If anything, it's a perfect place for me.

Even if one had a skill that was deemed a heresy to God-like Gluttony skill, which allows the user to consume soul of its victim, he/she will still be tolerated. To the extent that as long as their presence here was beneficial for the fortress city, their existence would be permitted.

That's exactly why I planned to go here. I had to, in preparation for the coming future.

Well, if I had to say so myself, the fortress city Babylon was actually quite large. About the same size as the capital, I guess?

There were lots of soldiers and mercenaries, and there were also a lot of warriors

gathering here. So this was the so-called frontline. I could feel a sense of oppression that was quite different from the capital. Somehow, I wonder if I'll meet those roughnecks again?

After passing through the gate, I walked along the main road where the general areas were spread on its left and right. At the end of main road was the military district.

In general, the commercial district was in the east, while the residential district was in the west. If you wanted to find an inn, that would be in the residential district. To summarize,

- Military district (South): Where the holy knights and soldiers from the kingdom were stationed. Also, local mercenaries can be hired here.

- General Area (North): This is where merchants and females who wanted to make a quick fortune gathered.

→Commercial District (East): restaurants, weapon shops, taverns, there were plenty of shops here just like at the capital.

→Residential District (West): It's mostly consisted of high class inns. Mostly because the warriors here earn more money than in other places.

You can't enter the military district at the moment. See, there are those uncles with scary face standing at the gate. Apparently Roxy had already gone inside.

Well, let's go to the residential district first, as I need to secure a place to stay.

Every and each one of them seemed to be a luxurious inn. Let's take a look at one.

As I entered, a good looking man in black suit, invoking the sense of cleanliness, greeted me. He seemed to be the employee of this inn.

“Welcome, looking for a lodging?”

“Yeah”

Even if I'm still wearing the skull mask, he still didn't fail to smile. I guess, it's already a fairly normal sight on this city.

“Although I'm wearing this mask, you act like it's nothing, eh?”

“Why of course, that's a mask that hinders recognition. There are many who want to

hide their feature here, so it's not a big deal."

He replied with an answer I had expected. Among these people, some of them were former holy knights a long time ago. They were exiled due to having raised a big problem for the kingdom.

"How much to stay for one night here?"

"Yessir, it's 5 gold per night including a bath and three meals."

I was so surprised, my jaw about to touch the floor. That 5 gold is too much of a ripoff. In comparison, similar accommodation at the capital will only cost 1 gold per night. That means, the pricing here was actually five times of that on the capital.

Looking at me who were upset, the employee then said.

"This seems to be customer's first visit to the fortress city. So it's normal to be surprised with the pricing. How about this? There are accommodations with cheaper pricing than this inn if customer go to the more densely populated area further to the west. Why don't customer try checking there?"

"I appreciate that advice. Anyways, how come you are willing to tell me that info?"

"That's easy to answer. Although customer can't stay here due to a lack of money at the moment, customer will eventually gain a lot from monster subjugations. When customer feels like. Or if customer has a secret desire to fulfill. At that time, feel free to return here."

"I see..."

That's a quite handy way of thinking.

They still helped even if the person didn't get to stay, because they were planting a seed of connection for the future. Amazing... the people here seemed to have different style compared to those at the capital.

"Thank you very much for the advice. Later then."

"Yes, I'll be waiting for your return."

I felt gratitude for the now deeply bowing employee for his advice.

As I kept walking, the scenery changed into that of cityscape. The luxurious inns built of new red bricks, was now replaced with buildings made of old white bricks.

It was probably pure white when it was newly built. But now it has darkened a little due to weathering.

It'd take a lot of money to bring the supplies for rebuilding up to the Gallia border. So of course the inns that don't have enough funds to rebuild won't be able to keep their appearance.

The further you go, the lower rank the inn will be. It could easily be judged from appearance.

My money on hand had fallen considerably thanks to Myne. At the moment I only had 4 gold and 30 silver... I'm really broke.

I had more than 50 gold once before. But I wasted it on many things. It almost feels like the gold coins had grown wings and flown out without permission. That's just great... I needed to be more careful from now on!

While thinking of such thoughts, I came to a section where most of the houses were made of cracked bricks.

Now then, where was the inn? Each one of them looked the same.

“Maybe, are you looking for a lodging?”

I turned toward the energetic voice of a woman. It was a woman seemingly slightly older than me. She approached me as she laughed loudly.

“Yes, but...”

“I thought so. Then, how about this. Stay at my inn. I’ll make it cheap for you.”

“How much?”

“50 silver!”

U~n, the price is five times cheaper, which was not bad. I should be able to raise more funds after killing some monsters, and it'll be faster, since there was no existence called Myne here.

Moreover, I think I like this innkeeper's personality.

"Understood. Then please."

"Ho, you've decided even before looking at my inn?"

"That's not a problem. In exchange, I want to eat something already."

I said while I looked all the ingredients that woman brought in her hands. It was all fresh.

That was one decisive factor. If she appreciated the ingredients that much, the cooking shouldn't be bad.

"Yosh, understood. Then, follow me."

"Let me bring half of it for you"

"You sure? I'll be imposing on you then. However, I won't give you any discount for that."

"I know, I just want to have something to eat as soon as possible."

"Ahahahah, if that's the case I'll use all my skills for the meal today."

I'll look forward to it. My stomach can hardly wait any longer; it could growl anytime.

Rather, it's growling now.

Guuuuuuu...

"Arara, your stomach is protesting already."

"Are you that hungry? Here, want to some of this bread first?"

"Is it okay?"

"I'll get the payment later as separate fee."

I see what you're doing there. Well, I'll just have to pay for it since I have no reason to refuse.

It's warm... a freshly baked bread. The sweet taste of barley enveloped me when I brought it to my mouth. Somehow, I felt like all the fatigue so far had been washed away.

"This is delicious. It's the first time I've eaten a bread like this."

"I'm glad that you liked it. That bread was made by my sister and her husband. You can eat it again while staying on our inn. There are several more kinds."

"That sounds good."

"We may not be able to compete in appearance to those luxury inns. But I'm quite confident with the inside. Well, please get in. Welcome to my inn!"

Ooh, the outer appearance was like what I expected. Cracked bricks, blurred signboard. Signs of weathering through the long years, a lot of unflattering aspects that made most people unwilling to stay here.

However, that's only on the outside.

Excitedly, I stepped inside the inn. It's all because of the taste of this one bread.

Chapter 56

The Ruffian's Gathering Place

The next morning, I woke up to the birds' chirping, something I've missed for a while now. Yesterday I was invited by proprietress to a dinner as a welcome to the inn, and I guess I drank a little too much alcohol.

That cost me some extra gold, so my wallet was completely bust now. Even today, I won't be able to continue staying here if I don't make any money from killing monsters.

I was told by the proprietress during the dinner that her husband had died, so she's raising her three children on her own. The eldest son had become independent, and now lives as a mercenary at the fortress city.

There were also two daughters. One was 14 and the other was 8 years old. They also had dinner at same table as me last night. But they acted distant to me and mostly remained quiet, they didn't seem excited when I tried to talk to them too.

Only the proprietress and I did the talking at the table last night.

While changing my clothes, I heard the sound of knocking on my door. Judging from the timid sound, it couldn't be the lady proprietress. Most likely one of her daughters.

After replying with my skull mask on, the door opened.

"Good morning, Fate-san"

"Morning"

"The breakfast is ready. It's at the dining room."

"Un, got it."

The eldest daughter told me that much before closing the door to escape. Somehow... she was blushing, I wonder why?

Ah!? Oops. I was in the middle of changing clothes, so my upper body had been left naked.

It's considered embarrassing to show such appearance to a young lady. Later, I will apologize.

Even so, my clothes are getting worn out. From the royal capital to this place, I've been through a lot of battles after all.

Especially from the fight with the machine angel Haniel. My clothes had burnt holes nearly everywhere thanks to that fight.

"I have to replace these already."

As I took the black sword Greed that was leaning on the wall, a gleeful laughter rang inside my head.

[That was undignified for one who wields me. Earn your keep quickly. Also don't forget to buy a new sheath that fits more better for me.]

"That's your real intention, right?"

[Why of course it was.]

Greed never changes. Well, for starters.

Greed's sheath had also been damaged in battle. It's still usable, but it could use a replacement. I changed my mind, both of us could use a new look.

If anything, I don't have any money at the moment. The pricing would be five times more expensive than that of the royal capital.

Fu~... lodging fee, clothes, and sheath... this will be the first time that I'll have to hunt monsters real hard to make a living.

"It should be alright for now. Let's go, Greed."

[Yes]

I brought Greed along and left the room. The second daughter then looked at me strangely.

"Onii-chan... why are you talking to a sword.....?"

She then took a little distance from me. Apparently, she saw me as a strange person for talking to my sword.

That's a misunderstanding! I tried to approach the girl to explain, but she instead kept distancing herself until she fell on her bottom. Then she started to cry.

"Mamaaaaaaaaaaa!"

She ran away to seek help from the proprietress.

I'll be in their care for the time being... but I've been disliked from day one...

Greed laughed so hard through the **[mind reading]**.

[Hahahahahaha, they just can't help but to dislike you. Eh, Fate?]

"Just who caused that in the first place?!"

[Certainly not my fault]

"It's YOUR fault! Really..."

No no no. If I kept doing this, I'll just keep getting strange stares.

Beyond the corridor, the eldest daughter was looking at me from afar!

Those eyes were filled with misunderstanding alright. Up to this point, that guy had been topless in front of me, and now he's talking to a sword---definitely signs of a dangerous guy. Have to avoid him at all costs!

"That's a misunderstanding. This sword is a living weapon..."

"I've never heard of a living weapon before"

Ku... of course she never did. I didn't know there was one myself before Greed talked to me through the mind reading skill.

All of a sudden, I just didn't know how to explain myself anymore...

Can't be helped. Please just accept that this guy... likes to talk to his sword. However, there was one more thing I needed to say.

"Ah right. Apart from this, I'm sorry about before."

“Whawhat for?”

“I will reply after properly clothing myself from now on.”

When I was tilting my head waiting for her response, the lady proprietress came in. Perhaps she went to call me since I haven't shown up despite that the breakfast was ready.

“Ara!? What's the matter? The other customers have already had their breakfast.”

I explained the circumstances to the lady proprietress. About how I opened the door to the eldest daughter while I was still topless. To that end, I apologized since I had troubled both of them.

This time, it was the lady proprietress who gave her daughter a good look.

“What's the matter with you? Haven't you always told the guests without opening the door? I wonder what is this all about?”

For some reason, the daughter's face turned red and she promptly escaped to the dining room.

I wonder if she's alright. The lady proprietress then spoke to me who was scratching my cheek.

“Please, excuse her”

“I see, I see. So that child is already at that age, huh?”

The lady nodded to herself, and gently pushed me to the dining room.

At that point, she whispered to me.

“By the way. Yesterday, my daughter helped you back to your room since you were too drunk and couldn't walk properly. At that time, she apparently saw your face behind that mask.”

That's a lie... to think somebody saw my real face on the very first day after I arrived on Babylon...

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.

I really want to hit the me from yesterday. The lady then continued her whispering.

“It’s alright, we’ll keep your secret safe as long as you are a good-natured person.”

“...thank goodness.”

I cannot actually move to the other inn.

Un, I get it. I shouldn’t drink alcohol too much. Nothing good will come from an intoxicated mind.

“There is no point in regretting what’s in the past. Now then, let’s eat the breakfast.”

“Well... that’s right. Let’s eat.”

“Let’s go then.”

“Please don’t push me that hard.”

“Come now”

It’s a somewhat nice inn. There was warmth here. I almost felt like I was among my long-lost family.

After having my breakfast with the proprietress’ eldest daughter, I headed out to the commercial district for information gathering with my stomach full. I’d like to replace a lot of things, but since I had no money, I had to be patient.

The commercial district was similar to the residential district in a sense. Most of the best stores are located closer to the main road. I have a feeling that the deeper I get, the lower ranked the store will be.

I was attracted by trendy-looking clothes at one of the prime location shop, so I went in to take a look.

“Ooooo... it’s expensive.”

[You’re just too poor!]

“Shaddap”

As if unaware that the clothes costed at least a gold each, Greed complained to me in amazement through [Mind reading]

Such a thing only makes me want to go hunt monsters and make money already. After walking around the commercial district for a while, I went out to hunt orcs.

As I walked, I noticed that people were gradually gathering. What's happening?

Perhaps a rare item auction or something. I got absorbed into the human wave, which was converging on a small bar. It was neither an interesting nor beautiful looking shop.

The old red bricks showed that it had some history, but it's hard to say it had tasteful atmosphere if any. Appearance-wise, it'd be better if it got demolished already.

I could not honestly believe that these people actually gathered here willingly. Moreover, it's still morning.

People are actually allowed to drink at this hour? I don't think so. Almost everyone here dreamed of getting rich quickly. Warriors would make preparation for monster hunting. Merchants would prepare to open their store.

U~n, was there actually something that was worth any fascination in here...?

When I tried to peek at what actually happened, the bar was opened. And at that same time, voices of joy could be heard one after another.

Apparently, everyone was here for her. A stunningly beautiful woman.

Her face was on the younger side. Her silky, almost transparent hair, was like flowing water.



What the... I can't keep my eyes away from her. Leaving my feelings behind, it's as if I was forced to stare at her... this feeling. This feels really weird.

I tried to retreat, against the wave of the crowd heading to see her. My instinct rang like an alarm...

Don't get close...

Greed told me through **[Mind reading]**.

[I see that you've finally realized.]

[That's... could she be]

[Yes, you're right. Like you, she's the owner of Mortal Sin skill]

I took a deep breath, and gave the light blue-haired girl another look. So she was the same kind as me, was she?

She noticed my gaze. No, I guess she was already aware of me.

She came out of the crowd, which easily parted when she passed, while smiling as she stared back at me. She then talked in a very enchantingly, soul-stealing voice.

"I've been waiting for you. My name is Eris. I've been watching you all the way from the kingdom. That's why, I went to Babylon at once, I've been waiting for you to come."

(*TL Note: Eris is using 'boku' here to refer to herself.*)

Eris then motioned for me to enter the shop. Now, what to do?

Well, no matter. I'll just accept the invitation. Perhaps, because we are owners of similar skills that we are drawn to each other.

Chapter 57

Guardian of Lust

It was only an empty shop; there was nobody else inside. Only Eris and I. We each sat down on one of the twenty chairs that surrounded a round table... Eris focused her jade colored eyes to me, smiling silently.

“So... are you the owner of this tavern?”

“No, I’m not. I’m just a part-time worker here. Master opened the bar because he needed to restock. By the way, he’s a 40-year-old virgin, and is currently seeking a wife—”

“I don’t need that kind of information. Anyways, why were you waiting for me?”

I accepted the invitation to find out why Eris was waiting for me. Not to talk about the owner of this tavern.

Seeing that I was waiting for her answer, Eris tucked a lock of her blue hair behind her ear, and stood up from her seat.

“Well, don’t be so rushed. I’m finally able to see you. This calls for a celebration.”

She walked back to the counter and took two glasses out from the shelves as she said that. She then poured wine into both glasses.

Looking at the label, it wasn’t the cheap brand that I was familiar with. I guess it’s an expensive brand.

She returned with two glasses of red wine in her hands.

“Now, please. I’ve kept this bottle for this very day. Just for you. Perhaps it’s too old for your taste, but please bear with me this time.”

“...Thanks”

Judging from her saddened face, apparently the wine used here was something

memorable for Eris.

To put out such thing for me... what on earth was this all about? I was perplexed by this one-sided situation.

But as per Eris' request, I took a sip of the red wine, then downed the glass. Indeed, it was a rather old wine, and quite delicious too.

Eris looked very pleased upon seeing me drinking the wine.

"A good drink, isn't it? Would you like a refill?"

I shook my head. I didn't come for this in the first place after all.

"Aren't you impatient? Well that's fine. Originally, I planned to contact you when you first awakened the Gluttony skill, back in the Kingdom. However, I unfortunately missed my chance. Before I could reach out to you, you'd already left the kingdom to pursue Roxy Heart."

"It was from that far back?"

"Yes, of course. Oh, I forget to tell you, I'm the owner of the Mortal Sin skill Lust, and also the guardian of the kingdom. I knew about both of you, including Greed here. I was the one who put Greed at the flea market at the commercial district back then, and sure enough, Fate came across it. So I just let it happen."

I could hear Greed clicking his tongue via **[mind reading]**. He probably didn't like the feeling of having danced on Eris' palm like that.

"Are you an acquaintance of Greed?"

"I'm afraid not. I'm a second-generation, so I don't really know about the first generation that much. By the way, that girl who travelled with you until you returned to Babylon was the first-generation Wrath. To put it simply, Myne and I don't get along so well. Look, my breasts are bigger than hers, right? She doesn't seem to like this."

Though Eris said so, didn't mean that it was true. Myne just doesn't like over-familiar people.

Other than that, first-generation, second-generation... Before I knew it, Eris was getting close to touching my chest.

Che. Everything she does, it's all to flare up my dirty thoughts so I that can't think well. What... is this aura that forces others to be fascinated in her?

When I drew my face away to resist it,

"Ah, my bad. This is the harmful effect of Lust skill. Its enchanting power will leak out arbitrarily from time to time. Once affected by it, anyone, regardless of age, can't help but to love me. Compared to Fate's Gluttony skill, the equivalent would be when you feel starving."

Eris didn't seem to mind it that much, she laughed.

Because of Gluttony skill, not only was I forced to keep killing monsters, I also had to maintain my focus, lest I'll lose myself... Eris's skill, on the other hand, didn't seem to have any drawbacks like mine did. Probably...

I gave Eris a look of scorn out of jealousy.

"Now now, don't give me such a face. I'm also struggling here and there too. Ah, right right, I remember now that Myne got mentioned. You two defeated the chimera angel Haniel the other day. I'm really thankful since that one was the most troublesome among the 7 types. Thank you."

"7 types?"

"Un, that's right. They were the ancient biological weapons created during ancient Gallia era. There were 7 types of them. Haniel was known as the machine angel of barrier, so it's especially difficult to get close to it. With the currently weakened Holy Knights, it would've been very hard to subdue it."

"I don't actually want to think about it... but there are 6 more of that thing...?"

The weather is really nice, isn't it... I tried to think that way, as I asked for confirmation, which Eris answered with a nod and bitter smile. I put down the empty wine glass, feeling weary all of a sudden.

"Well, no need to feel bothered about that. Most of them are inactive in the capital of Gallia. There is one which is kind of worrisome... that's Haniel, but it's already been defeated."

Haniel's cocoon somehow ended up on that desolate ruin of an ancient town. That

thing shouldn't have been there originally, someone must've brought it there.

Because I was involved in Haniel's case, I'd be lying if I said that I didn't care. However, once I get involved further, I wouldn't be able to achieve my original goal.

While drinking another glass of wine to quench my parched throat,

"Let's stop talking about that, shall we? Even I don't want to stick out my neck out for the problem of the first generation. Now then, onto the main topic."

"Main topic!?"

I first thought that the conversation would end with that info about the machine angels. However, Eris didn't seem to consider them as something important. I wonder what problem is greater than those strong enemies?

And the next sentence Eris said enraged me.

"It's about the Holy Knight Roxy Heart. She'll die in Gallia."

"What the! Are you kidding me!!"

I hit the glass in my hand on the table. Ignoring my show of anger, Eris calmly continued.

"It's important for the kingdom, no, for the future of the kingdom. Her death will certainly lead the kingdom to a better state."

"Are you kidding me! How would the kingdom go in a better direction if she dies!? Roxy is one of the few Holy Knights who actually cares for the people. Even for me, that's why..."

I grabbed Eris' sleeve. Even then, she didn't get mad, which made me feel awkward.

"Do you know, what the Hate phenomenon is?"

"When you kill monsters, hate will accumulate on you and you'll be more likely to be targeted. In any case, it will reset after a day."

"That's correct. But not entirely. It doesn't actually reset. It'll accumulate over the years, and in the end give birth to a monster with unique name--the crown tier. Like

that Crown-tier kobold you fought back at the Hearts' territory.”

That's right... Greed did said that it was born out of the hate from Heart family continuously killing kobolds for many generations... Now that we're talking about this, Eris knows about what I did to that extent?

Did someone monitor me? I didn't even notice at all.

An unknown force separated my hand from Eris' sleeve.

“It's good since you've calmed down a little. Now let's continue. That hate phenomenon occurs even to humans. Tyranny, discrimination, and poverty caused by the Holy Knight... people have accumulated hate throughout their sufferings. Adding to that, the death of Roxy Heart—the last heir of the only Holy Knight family that was adored by the people. Moreover, it was a death caused by the other fellow Holy Knights, which will make the hate even more intense.”

“What are you talking about...”

“Roxy Heart's death will be a sacrifice so that immense hate can be accumulated, and it will bring the rise of a new generation of humans. People with better skills than the Holy Knights will start being born, and they will become the pillar of the future kingdom. Isn't that wonderful?”

“Someone dies... how can that be wonderful?”

Just to artificially create people with powerful skills, there is no way I'll allow them to use Roxy.

“Of course. It'd be hard for you to lose Roxy Heart if you only looked at your short term interest. However, if you look at hundred years ahead, thousand years ahead, the story will be different. I want you to understand this. We are the owners of similar skills. But Fate had just awakened recently. I'm sorry for saying a bad thing. As for me, I only want you to avoid following your emotions and try to fight Tenryu.”

I stood up from my seat, not wanting to hear any more. Then, when I was about to open the tavern's door, Eris said,

“I've already told you what I need to say. Please understand... I'll leave that part to you. I promise. I will not disturb you anymore, and I'll only watch as a bystander. I'll be glad

if you'll return here one day, that time as a regular customer. At that time I'll give you proper service."

Eris' voice carried a hint of loneliness. Just like Myne, Eris may also be living under some inhibition. Unexpectedly, I may be the only one who is free.

Chapter 58

Warrior Mukuro, Again

After getting out of the tavern and donning the skull mask, I sighed.

In the background, an overflowing amount of people were still waiting for the tavern to be opened. Judging from that, I think the tavern will be prospering as long as Eris remains there.

Is it because of the enchanting property of the Lust skill...? It's probably more than that.

Even if the power of Gluttony skill owner diminishes, it can be regained by consuming strong souls. Lust skill might also have something like that too.

Besides, it didn't seem like she owned a Mortal Sin weapon. Well, it's not like she could freely bring a weapon while working at the tavern. I'm not absolutely sure, but since I have Greed, and Myne also has Sloth, Eris should also own some kind of Mortal Sin weapon.

“Hey, Greed”

[What is it?]

“Does Eris have a mortal sin weapon as well?

[No idea. As she said, I have barely any knowledge about her. Even when I saw her in the past, she didn't wield any weapons.]

“Then, she doesn't have any?”

[Hahaha, that might not be the case]

Greed didn't know about her too. Well, it can't be helped. Either way Eris had promised that she'd only be a bystander. If she can be trusted, then there is no need yet to investigate her power.

Well, there was still plenty of daytime left. I'd better do my work as a warrior and make some money.

The way it was done here was the same as at the capital. You only needed to bring evidence that you've killed the monster. In an orc's case, it would be their ears, much like the goblins back then.

For gargoyles, it would be the horn. Every monster has a designated part, so if even if you cut them apart and show it to the payment facility, they won't give you anything extra for it.

I've read about the list of monsters in the vicinity back at the inn I'm staying in, and have confirmed it.

The easiest target will be the orcs, as they make up the majority of monsters in Gallia. Since I already fought the orcs before, I can handle them by myself. In any case, a squad usually consists of 100-200 orcs, so if I kill them all I'll be able to make some fortune. I could use that money to buy new clothes, and while I'm at it, buy a new sheath for Greed at the same time.

I walked around the commercial district for a while. After buying 2 large hemp bags, I headed out of the fortress city Babylon.

"Let's do our best today"

[That's the spirit. Earn lots and lots of money, buy a new sheath for me, and it must be of the highest quality!]

"I can't afford to spend on such luxury!"

[How dare you say that! You have no idea how much hardship I have to go through everyday]

"Such as?"

[Controlling the path of the magic arrow, furthermore adjusting the infused magic spell and releasing it.]

Un. It's true that I'm indebted to him in that particular area. I can't argue about that. Greed may have a foul mouth, but he does his job well.

"I guess I have no choice. Since that's the case, support me well"

[Leave it to this me! Gahahahaha]

Such amazing confidence. As usual.

Maybe I should try to emulate him a little? In Babylon, a warrior needed to be stand out anyways.

No need to overdo it, I just had to look dignified, at least.

Of course, if I continued to kill a huge amount of monsters on my own, others will start to notice my presence. People who don't like it would definitely spring out like bamboo shoots after the rain.

If I got nervous at that time, I'd be caught up in an unnecessary scuffle.

Encouraging myself, I headed out of the gate.

The traffic was intense on the main street. There were crowds of warriors heading out for some challenge, and merchants carrying their goods.

Oho!? A gathering of warriors could be seen at the front gate. Oh, they're probably recruiting for parties.

That had nothing to do with me.

I heard a voice when I was passing by.

As I turned around, I saw a man older than me wearing a seemingly tough armor.

“The skull mask guy over there. Why don’t you join our party? Looks to me you are a swordsman. The guy who usually act as our frontline was injured.”

“Pardon me, but I’m a solo hunter. I don’t plan to associate with anyone.”

The man retreated a short distance upon hearing my reply. It was a reaction I didn’t expect. The man scaredly asked me.

“My apologies. Going out on your own... could it be, you are a former holy knight, sir?”

Oh, I almost forgot. The disgraced holy knights who failed their missions, and those that were exiled, were all gathered in this city to gather funds to restore their status.

Perhaps he thought that I was one of those people.

In any case, I have Holy Sword Mastery that I obtained from killing Hado, that alone is already very Holy Knight-like. So it won’t be a problem if I nodded here.

“Well, something like that.”

“Hii, then I’m sorry. Your clothes are... like that. Anyways I’ll excuse myself now.”

He’s right. There is no way anyone could tell that someone is a former holy knight if they were to wear clothes that were burnt here and there. The holy knights were proud, so they tended to wear well-tailored equipment.

I turned my eyes back to the gathering of warriors.

That’s it. I could tell that there were three former holy knights among them. It’s easy to distinguish since they had a different aura compared to other warriors. Their eyes were also gleaming with ambition.

There is no mistaking that they are here to make a name for themselves.

Greed then said through the [mind reading].

[Perhaps they are trying to steal some glory, while the kingdom army is busy with the Tenryu. Your ex-mistress Roxy just arrived yesterday though. So they can’t make any moves right away.]

“Then, it was something Roxy had agreed upon before arriving here, aren’t they former holy knights?”

[That’s right. Even with the kingdom’s army here, they can still make a name for themselves through monster subjugations.]

Babylon is indeed swirling with various kind of things. It might be good for Roxy... but now I’ve become a little anxious about Myne who went further into Gallia.

Keeping the discontent to myself, I passed through the gate.

Now then, with the empty bags on my shoulder, I marched south toward the border of the kingdom and Gallia.

As far as I could see, there was no monsters coming from beyond the borderline.

In this situation, I will have to go deeper into Gallia and look for a crowd of monsters.

“I really am no good with Gallia’s air that reeks of blood.”

[Get used to it]

The air beyond the borderline was very much different. If I ate while smelling the odor, the food would surely lose half of its taste.

I tried taking out one dried meat from my bag and chewed on it.

Err, these smell of blood caused me to feel as if I'm eating a piece of raw meat.

ueeeee...

I put the already bitten piece of meat back into my bag. I'm getting late after all.

“I want to return to the kingdom before lunch if I can.”

[That'll depend on Fate]

Indeed, that's right.

When I visited Gallia with Myne, I came across several groups of orcs even though I didn't really want to fight them. So this time, finding them shouldn't be that hard.

While I continued to walk, I noticed a group of orcs—about the size of a single squad.

“Orcs really are anywhere in Gallia.”

[It's the kind of monster with good vitality, reproductive power, and growing speed combined. A human woman they rape would surely get pregnant due to their high fertility. 20 will be born at the same time from one mother, breaking out of their mother's belly forcefully. In addition, they can grow faster by consuming the corpse of their mother.]

“...I don't need that kind of explanation!”

[Fuhn, I simply told you how it is.]

I knew that monster has a habit of eating humans, but I never knew before that they also used human to conceive their children. I planned to eat something after this, so hearing about it left a bad taste.

Feeling sick, I approached the horde of orcs,

“Ah, I started a little late”

[What are you doing, Fate! Why so dull]

“Shaddap”

A warrior party had also discovered the squad of orcs and engaged them in battle ahead of me.

It's the implicit rule of monster hunting, the first to come will receive priority.

Behaviour like joining the battle in the middle without prior agreement is considered a violation. One doesn't have to abide by it, but if one violated it one too many times, they'll get ostracized by the other warriors on Babylon.

Since I usually go on solo hunts, I'll have no problems from doing it. However, having fingers pointing at me on my back is something I want to avoid.

[Fate, be preemptive. Steal it! My special sheath is on the line here]

“Don't say an unreasonable thing”

The warrior party was fighting rather well, and I feel that they'd eventually win if given some time. They'll be okay even if I just stand here, but time keeps ticking.

Looking at another direction... would you look at that, two squads of orcs coming from the west—reinforcement of 400 strong? Left alone, they'd inflict huge casualties to the warrior party that was still fighting.

“Apparently, we just got our turn.”

[Seems so]

I drew out black sword Greed and headed toward the other horde of orcs.

Chapter 59

The Fortress-like Demonic Shield

Two squads eh...? If I kill them all, I shouldn't be lacking in money for a while.
It shouldn't be a problem to kill them all, since by making use of the Hate phenomenon,
I don't need to worry about any of them escaping
I just need to quickly break through to the middle of the 400 orcs.

“Greed, let's go!”

[Fuu, any time]

I had simply ran straight through them. Seeing such a monotonous move, the orc leader started to order the other orcs to intercept me.

Soon after, countless numbers of fire arrow cover the sky, raining toward me.

[Here they are, Fate]

“I know that.”

Well, shall I try it?

I thrusted the black sword forward, and activated the third tier form.

The shape started to change, from a black sword into the demonic shield. A black shield that was even larger than my body appeared in front of me. And, at the same time, the arrows started landing.

I could feel the impact that was transmitted from the shield to my right hand. Fire arrows seemingly rained down endlessly.

However, none of them managed to reach me. The black shield blocked them all.

Whilst thinking how should I use it next, Greed kept speaking through the [mind reading]

[How about that! Neither physical nor magical attacks can pierce through my third form. This demonic shield is like a fortress! What do you think now! You can start

praising me, respect me now, Fate!]

“We are in the middle of battle. Would you please be quiet!”

Damn, I haven’t even reached the orc squadron yet, but Greed already thought that we’re gonna win. Even though I had refuted him, I had to admit that this was a good weapon.

“You can forget about the new sheath if you keep being noisy.”

[Oioi, that won’t do. Don’t say something like that. If it’s only Fate who’re wearing new clothes, it would be unfair if I stayed with my old sheath. It should be the other way around! I should wear a new sheath, and you just stay in that getup.]

“Why it should be like that!? Isn’t that strange!?”

It’s still the usual unreasonable Greed. As his wielder I had to put up with all of his shenanigans.

Using the black shield to block the orcs’ attack, Greed and I marched in all gung ho. I’m closing in on the orcs soon. When I was about to change back to the black sword and pounce forward,

[Wait, Fate. Breakthrough as it is now!]

“Eh, are you serious!?”

Could it be, he’s holding a grudge against me because I plan to delay buying him a new sheath? Since it sounded silly, I couldn’t help but to scoff at Greed.

[You’ll see why it’s such a huge shield. Now, run without stopping!]

“I don’t care anymore.”

From where did that confidence come from? Well, when he’s like this, that means everything he said will go well.

Here goes nothing, let’s try it out.

I decided to keep it in shield form instead of switching to the black sword.

I could feel heavy thuds transmitted to my hand from my shield one after another. And every time, “Buhyiii” sound can also be heard, which meant that they had died upon collision.

In addition to that, the inorganic voice continued to announce the increase in my stats.

“This is... amazing”

[Right, right? Hahahahaha, this is Shield Bash. It supposedly requires some muscle power but the you now can do it easily. Against monsters of these orcs' level, they'll get blown away easily just like that. Come on now, full speed ahead]

“Yosh, here we go”

This is good. Much easier than using either the sword or scythe. How convenient, there is no need for such thing like feints, I just need to run up to the enemy and crash into them.

I single-mindedly plowed through the orcs.

Then I made a U-turn and rushed back toward the orcs again.

Once again, the inorganic voice notified me about the increase in my stats.

Well, it may be unscrupulous of me to say this, but this way of fighting is also interesting.

As I started to get used to this new form of Greed, the orcs began to make a new move.

The leader, the high orc, had changed their formation.

In order to prevent me from trampling over them, it positioned the shield wielders at the front, supported by lots of orcs from behind.

“Can we break through that?”

[Don't worry. Charge at them decisively. Fate, march ahead fearlessly!]

“Okay, understood. I'll break that orc's wall thoroughly.”

[That's the spirit]

I tried to re-penetrate the orcs rank, running like a galloping horse that has forgotten how to stop.

When we came in contact, I felt a much heavier impact than before.
Even so, I couldn't just stop there.

"Uoooooooooooo00000oooo"

I raised my voice along with my speed. At that point the orcs' meat wall started to have some trouble.

The sound of collision could be heard nearly everywhere.

The orcs at the back row collapsed after crashing into each other, probably due to absorbing the impact between my shield and the orcs in the front row.

I thought I could hear several 'Buhhyii' sounds. And right afterward, the inorganic voice informed me about my increasing stats yet again.

The orcs' formation was gradually undone, and soon they wouldn't be able suppress my power.

[Fate, go, go, go! Trample those pigs into mince meat]

"That's too gross! Tone it down a bit"

[What do you mean? There no 'tone down' in this me's dictionary.]

Good grief... I guess it's impossible to manage Greed's foul mouth. It's true that my victims this time have been turned into mince meat, but I don't need anybody to tell me about it.

Aaaaa, when I actually saw it, I felt like I wouldn't be able to eat meat for a while.

Let's finish this already. I exerted my full strength, destroying the orcs' formation.

They were literally sent to the sky. It was as if a flower made of orcs had bloomed in the sky.

[Gluttony skill activated]

**[Durability+940800, Strength+921600, Magic+729600, Spirit+768000,
Agility+729600 will be applied to your stats]**

Even the two orc squads were easily devastated. Any lesser orcs would be sent flying to their death with simple flick of my shield. At this point, I could just switch to scythe

form and start reaping earnestly, but I decided to stay with shield form since I'd started to get the hang of it.

After I realized that I'd already got used to the weapon to a certain extent, I turned my attention to the fleeing blue-skinned high orcs. I've been fighting the orcs several times already, and I've come to know that they have a rather crude but strict social hierarchy.

The other orcs tried to protect them because these blue-skinned orcs are high ranking individuals. I don't know if they do this from reason or merely out of their natural instinct.

But in any case, the command of the high orcs was absolute for the lower leveled orcs. It's kinda like how humans treated the holy knights.

[What will you do, Fate. Will you chase after them and kill them all with the demonic shield?]

"No, leave them be. Let's finish up."

Enough with the black shield. I switched to black bow form.

I nocked a magic arrow that was created from my magical power. This magic arrow has an auto-tracking function, so I don't have to really aim properly to hit with it. Even someone with a lack of experience in archery like me can use it with ease.

But even so, other orcs kept getting on the arrow's path and prevented the magic arrow from hitting its actual target. In that case, I could only try another route.

I aimed the black bow to the sky, and shot 2 arrows consecutively.

The magic arrows flew in a curved path, bypassing all other orcs, and directly hit the heads of the fleeing high orcs. With a magic arrow stuck in their heads, the two high orcs fell to the ground

[Gluttony skill activated]

[Durability+406800, Strength+435500, Magic+350600, Spirit+308600, Agility+336800 will be applied to your stats]

I nodded to myself after confirming that the gluttony skill had activated from the inorganic voice resounding in my head. Not yet, it's alright... The me now, it's alright to consume a huge amount of stats like this.

I wonder if it's because the fight with the machine angel Haniel, but Gluttony skill has

been quiet as if it's sleeping. It may only be temporary, but it's good for me. Or perhaps it's the result of my training in suppressing the gluttony skill. Well, I wish that it was indeed the latter.

I looked around at the orcs who had lost their high orc commander. The remaining orcs had scrambled trying to attack me.

Without their leader, the orcs were no different from goblins or kobolds. I killed the orcs in the distance with the black bow, and took out those that managed to approach with the black sword.

"It seems I'll be able to rout them completely"

[Umu. With this you'll be able to buy new things. Quickly clean them up, harvest their ears, and return to Babylon.]

"I know that"

I began to cut out the ears of the fallen orcs and collected it inside the 2 bags I brought. This was quite a chore as there are a lot of them. Unexpectedly, the fighting part was so much easier.

I collected the parts required to prove to the exchange facility that I had killed the monsters—the orc's ear. By the time I finished harvesting, it was already sundown.

[Fate, don't forget the ears of the two high orcs]

"Yeah"

I almost forgot, ironically, because I saved them for last so that I wouldn't get confused. Greed is strangely useful in weird times.

Yossha, I hefted the 2 bloody hemp bags.

"Well, shall we go home?"

[We shall... or so I thought. Fate, we got company]

Alarmed by Greed's warning, I raised my face, and true enough the other warrior party is heading towards me.

They are... the warrior party that fought the orc squad not so far from here. Them

heading here only meant that they've already finished dealing with the orcs on their side.

I wonder why they're coming here. I put the hemp bags I had carried on the ground and readied my hand on the black sword, just in case if I needed to use it, and waited for them to arrive.

Chapter 60

Parting Place

The number... it's about 30 people. That's quite a large amount for a party.
That guy walking at the front is likely to be the party leader.
I noticed that he's decked out in high class equipment. The guy then gave me a strange smile.

I've never seen such a smile before.

Who are you...? I grasped the black sword even tighter as I stood there.

[Calm down, Fate.]

“Yeah, but I feel that that guy will be a problem.”

Unaware of my thoughts, he arrived. He still kept the smile even as he begun talking to me.

“Hi, my name is Norden Alistair. You are really strong. I've been watching you from afar and yet, I can still feel your overwhelming might. May I know your name?”

Norden said while offering his right hand for a handshake. However, I didn't respond to it.

“I am Mukuro. Just a warrior. Nothing more, nothing less. Would you please? I want to return to Babylon to cash this out.”

As I said that, Norden's party had surrounded me. I couldn't go home if it's like this. I fiddled a little with my skull mask, and hefted the hemp bags back on my shoulder. Somehow, I had a bad feeling. These people seemed to be infatuated to this Norden, since it didn't seem like they will let me go until he's finished talking.

And to that end, all of them readied their hands on their weapons.

Tsk. so much for adults. The way they see me: it's as if I'm already dead for not complying with Norden's will.

What's with that... There is no way this party is meant to do something like this, right? No, it couldn't be.

Then why...?

While I was thinking about the sense of incongruity, my eyes landed on the weapon strapped on Norden's waist.

A holy sword!? I see. So that how it is. But even so, that doesn't mean that I have to change my attitude.

"So you are a Holy Knight..."

"As you've guessed, I'm a Holy Knight. Today was the first time in my life that I went on vacation. So I brought my men and came to this place."

I was quite amazed. He considers hunting monsters as nothing but a game. Norden put up a smile while combing his blonde long hair with one hand. If I were a woman, I might've fallen for him already. Unfortunately, I'm a guy.

This is slowing me down.

Anyways, a Holy Knight, eh? Perhaps he's angered from me snatching the 2 squads of orcs just now. That's probably also why he ordered his men to surround me like this.

"Could it be you want these?"

I pointed at the two hemp bags that are filled with orc's ears

But Norden shook his head.

Tsk, I guess I was worrying for nothing.

"Let me tell you this: don't waste my time anymore or else."

This is the world where power rules everything. I can easily do anything that can be deemed unreasonable back in the kingdom.

I drew the black sword and brandished it toward Norden.

"Wait, hold on. As I said before, I'm very impressed with your strength."

“So...?”

“How about this. Why don’t you serve under me? I can give you anything you want.”

As usual, Holy Knights... Apparently, this is the one thing that hasn’t changed even here in Babylon.

They deemed that everything is possible with money and power alone. That’s the kind of story.

If that’s true, then I won’t even be here in the first place.

“I refuse. You can do that to others. But I only work alone and will not join others. I hope that is all.”

I kept pointing the black sword toward Norden. As Greed said “Indeed, indeed” through **[Mind reading]**, I prepared to leave.

If I want to serve anyone, it will only be Roxy and I have no intention to work under any other holy knight. I’ve already decided on that the day I left the kingdom.

Watching my attitude, Norden backed down a little.

“I had seen you using that black sword during the previous fight. How I was really amazed. Its shape can actually change, can’t it? It was said that there is something like multiform weapons in the past. I read about it in an old document once. Who would’ve thought that it actually exists? If you don’t mind, can you show me how it works?”

“I also refuse. I don’t have time to do that now.”

Again, Greed told me through **[Mind reading]** : “Just kill this fickle guy already. This me will allow you.” It’s him being noisy as usual.

Looking at Norden, he sighed and motioned his hand.

His subordinates began to retreat.

“Understood. Then shall we save it for when the next opportunity arises?”

“...there will be no next time. I hate persistent guys.”

"We'll see about that. I always got all the things I ever want. And that's not going to change even now."

Norden let me through with a smile still plastered on his face as usual. As I passed by, I gave his men a glance. All of them seem to be strong. Perhaps Norden himself had recruited them for their talents.

His men also seemed pleased to serve under him.

Good grief... I came across a troublesome guy as soon as I arrived in Babylon. Why does my life seem to be always intertwined with holy knights?

Finally, I managed to extricate myself from Norden's party. When I just thought so, he actually called out to me again. I didn't bother to even turn my head.

"I'm working at the Babylon's military district under Roxy Heart who just arrived yesterday. Come visit us anytime if you don't mind. I'll be waiting."

Dammit, so he's actually working under Roxy. Imagining them being together, somehow... that makes me angry.

In addition to that, I can sense some unknown malice from Norden. I'm merely a normal warrior, so I can't get close to Roxy easily. I can only pray that I'm just imagining things.

There is also the matter with what Eris told me. The grim air around Roxy only gets thicker.

No matter how hard I think about it, nothing comes out. With the hemp bags on my shoulder, I crossed the border between the kingdom and Gallia. Fresh air entered my lungs. The irritation from before died down gradually.

But not all of it. I hadn't felt something like this before but now it kept egging me. I wonder what this feeling is...

"Hey, Greed."

[What's the matter? Where did your usual energetic self go?]

"That's... no, nevermind"

[What is it? It's alright, you can tell me.]

“It’s fine.”

I tried to consult with Greed, since I felt something weird. But I felt stupid for doing that, so I refrained. It’ll be alright.

“Well then, let’s return to Babylon. Cash this thing out and buy new equipment.”

[Umu, I’ve been waiting for that. Craft me a sheath made of pure gold]

“Are you kidding me? That’ll be too heavy!”

[Hahahahah, consider it muscle training. How about that!]

Aside from the muscle training part, he’s just too unreasonable as usual. Greed prefers flashy equipment. And he kept nagging me about that. If I were to leave the managing of my equipment to Greed, I’ll end up fully dressed in golden attire... I don’t really want to imagine it.

If I try to go to tavern or inn like that, I’ll end up being a laughing stock.

“What my ass. Normal is the best, normal! Normal is number one!”

[That’s boring. I bet you’re going to buy another set of black clothes again, aren’t you~? Too plain.]

“That’s right. Black is practical since the dirt stuck on it will be less noticeable.”

[Fine, fine.]

“Fu~, now while we’re at it, I’ll put a black sheath for Greed.”

[That won’t do. Your preference is far from impressive.]

“Hah! Speak for yourself!”

Really now... when you say that, I felt like leaving you behind inside a shelf.

As I continued to converse with Greed, the fortress Babylon came into view. A

defensive city protected by outer wall made of adamantite. We went in through the gate at the northern side.

Well, let's get the cash then buy new clothes and sheath. I'll buy some that will match this skull mask. Of course, all of it will be black-colored.

Chapter 61

Greed Style

Since I had two hemp bags soaked in blood, both the merchants and the warriors near the gate were looking at me with amazed looks when I passed by.

Then they started to whisper to each other.

“Are you kidding me...”

“Oioi, could it be all that blood coming from the orc’s ear... that many...?”

“If that’s the case, then he had defeated 2 squads of orcs on his own? Who is that guy!?”

Even if they were whispering, I will eventually hear about it anyways since it will pass to other people. It won’t be long until my presence became known in Babylon.

Now, although I’ve become renowned as the warrior Mukuro, I won’t need to sneak around like when I was still in the kingdom. Here in Babylon, it’s the warriors’ role to subjugate monsters.

Warriors capable of tackling a large amount of monsters will surely be welcomed here.

I don’t mean to emulate Greed but I do need to act dignified.

With blood still dripping from my bags, I forced my way through the crowd. The exchange facility is at the end of the main road on the eastern side of the gate leading to the military district.

According to the proprietress of the inn where I’m staying in, it’s the busiest part of the city. Not only because of the soldiers, but also the warriors.

It’s the common gathering ground for them because it’s where they can gather information and find out about the reward for monster subjugation.

When I got there, I just hope that the classic, meddlesome warriors won’t feel obliged to try to create problems for me.

Well, I’m entering the exchange facility in such a conspicuous way after all so I’m just

wondering how the warriors that were already there will react. In any case, I can't exchange the ears for money anywhere else for all I care.

Greed once again talked through [mind reading] to annoy me.

[Fate, here is what you need to do. Don't give a damn to those other warriors. Just split them in two starting from their head. I'll even help you!]

"Again being noisy. If I do that, I'll make all the warriors on the whole Babylon as my enemy."

[Fuuhn, that's exactly what I want]

"You wish!"

Ha... Greed wants me to be that kind of warrior. That, while ridiculous, didn't surprise me... he's just that twisted of a being.

[The point is to do it with a dignified look. That's what I always say]

"I know that already. But I've never been treated as human being before I awakened the gluttony skill. That time has been engraved deep into my body, I can't easily get rid of it."

[Miserable. You are my wielder regardless! Very well, this me will guide you. Follow as I said.]

"Don't be overly exaggerated."

[I know. Leave it to me, gahahahahaha]

Ha~, that made me really worried.

This is a trial anyways. So let's just follow in earnest. This is the kind of world where powerful warrior will have a say. In Babylon, it will be hard to anything if other warriors keep pestering you.

After receiving a simple tip from Greed on how to become a brave warrior, I entered the exchange facility.

This is amazing. It's so wide. The windows and even the ceilings are decorated with colorful glasses. I can feel the religious sense through its beauty.

While I was distracted, two warriors came from my sides and surrounded me.

“Oi, you’re standing in our way. Get lost.”

“What’s with that... you don’t want your face being looked at? And a skull mask at that, what a bad taste. Moreover, where is your party?”

“What’s with that bag in your hand? Anyway there doesn’t seem to be anything precious in it, eh, skull-kid? Your face must’ve been so ugly to wear that mask. That’s why you’re hiding it, right? Take the mask off and let me see your face.”

Yep, I ran into trouble right away.

Even if I knew it already and I don’t want to admit it out loud..... it’s probably because my rather small body which looks weak.

After everything had been done, what Greed had told me just now seems to be make sense now.

Well, why don’t we try it out? I tried to recall what Greed had taught me.

“Shut the hell up, I have nothing to do with small fries like you. If you don’t want to get hurt painfully, scram.”

“Haa!? Bastard, what did you say just now?”

The face of the two warriors turned red in anger, staring at me as if trying to swallow me.

As expected, they couldn’t afford to draw their weapon. If you are involved in a bloodshed while inside the facility, you’ll be banned from using the exchange facility.

In other words, I think it’ll be fine if we fight bare-hand. Actually, one of the warrior already lunge in with a punch.

I easily caught his fist with my right hand, and said,

“Do it now if you want to give it up.”

“Hah, I want to see you try. I have friends here with me.”

Friends, huh... so there are 8 people? Since it has come to this, I'll just do it.
I crushed the man's fist as a reply.

"Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa..."

With an annoyed voice, I threw the two hemp bags to the air.
I kicked the man who had collapsed on the floor with a broken fist. That's one down.
Seven remaining. Three of them jumped at me from the left.
I should handle them all at once. In that case, I activated the martial arts skill **[One-inch Punch]**.

This is a powerful skill that can destroy the body internally. It can damage the organs, rupture blood vessel and break bones, bypassing any armor. It's perfect as it can incapacitate the enemy.

Circulating power to my left hand, I hit one of the men on his side. Then a continuous hit on the slick-haired man's left and right shoulders.

Afterward, I kicked the bearded man in the crotch.

The three collapsed with multiple explosive sound. All of them were unconscious with foaming mouth.

That's four... I considered escaping, since all of them at last drew their weapons out.
It seemed that they want to kill me here right now. Even so, I can't really reciprocate with the same attitude.

Their attacks are monotonous. Looking at their footwork just like Aaron had taught me, I can easily read their attacks.

Without trouble, I knocked down all four to the floor with **[One-inch Punch]**. The eight friends now lay unconscious on the floor.

Well, is that it?

I caught the two hemp bags that I've thrown to the air just now.

"Done?"

Of course there is no answer from the now unconscious guy. Although I had hit them

with the one-inch punch, I deliberately missed their vital points. They won't die, since they have warrior's tough body.

I stepped over the fallen men and headed toward the counter to claim my reward. For the information, this daring stepping over people act was something that Greed had taught me. But right now, I really felt like stepping on these people.

Because there are people like them, public evaluation of warriors in general tend to be bad.

I walked calmly, with any warriors on my way retreating left and right, toward the counter.

The receptionist was an attractive looking girl, and she smiled at me. Well... I'll try to act as nice as possible to you.

"I came to cash this in. Please?"

"Ye, yes... I will confirm it now so please wait a moment."

Two heavy hemp bags landed on the counter with a loud thud. As she can't carry it on her own, other officials came in from the back to assist.

I supposed they are already used to this kind of work. The confirmation shouldn't take too long.

"Eee... there are 400 orc ears, and 2 high orc ears. Umm... just to be sure, did you kill all this by yourself?"

"Yes, of course. They aren't that troublesome of an enemy after all."

I replied while re-adjusting my skull mask. There is no need to lie. If compared to the difficult fight against machine angel Haniel, those orcs are too cute.

The receptionist's face turned pale to my reply. Eh? Did I just say something wrong?

"Pardon me. But could it be that sir is a Holy Knight?"

Why of course. To be able to defeat orcs squads of that size, only holy knight that can come to mind. As long as my mortal sin skill remained unknown, it's normal to come to that conclusion.

She's afraid because she doesn't know what to do if I am really a holy knight. She's

scared that I might threaten her for not properly managing the warriors who had attacked me just now.

That phenomenon from the kingdom still applies even here in Babylon. No matter where I go, the holy knights still reign supreme.

But anyways, please calm yourself. Otherwise, I might not get my reward anytime soon.

“No, I’m not. I’m just a warrior named Mukuro. I’m not a Holy Knight.”

“Really?”

“There is no use in lying about such things. Please give me the reward already. That said, I need to replace my clothes.”

“Yes, understood. I’ll prepare it soon.

There were 100 gold coins on the counter. Apparently, one orc is worth 20 silver. While a high orc is worth 10 gold. If I added the money I have now, it’ll be 103 gold in total.

That’s such an easy work, isn’t it!? If that’s the case, the money loving Myne should’ve been able to make a lot of money in Babylon. And yet she seems to be reluctant to go to Babylon. Nothing I can do with that. Even as she continued to kill monsters in Gallia, Myne didn’t show any willingness to exchange it with money. I guess for her, Gallia had different meaning.

It’s been a while since I have that much of money, so the face under the skull mask is actually chuckling to myself. Even if the pricing here is exorbitant, I should still be able to get decent equipment if I have enough money.

I thanked the receptionist, and when I tried to leave the exchange facility in ease,

“So it’s you. Are you the one who did that?”

I was caught up by a dignified and familiar voice. Turning to the source of that voice, there was a holy knight standing there. Right, it was Roxy.

If only I could, I would rather to meet her in a better conditioned attire, and not this ragged clothes instead.

Chapter 62

Mixed Color

My heart was quite shaken due to this turn of events.

But it should be alright. Thanks to the Skull mask's recognition inhibitor, Roxy won't know that I'm actually Fate. Perhaps, she'll simply think that I'm an eccentric guy with a suspicious-looking mask.

I opened my mouth and was about to reply to Roxy who was looking at me, but I stopped myself.

That was dangerous... I was about to say what I used to say when I had been working as her servant.

I'm not her servant anymore so if I were to speak humbly to her, she might suspect me. I guess it's better to talk roughly like a warrior should.

"So what if it's me?"

I said that and waited for Roxy's response. I was sweating bullets under the skull mask. She said while pointing at my feet,

"Please retreat from there first. I feel sorry for them for being stepped on by you."

"Oh, oops."

Apparently I had unknowingly stepped on the fallen warrior from earlier. I did do it deliberately before, but I didn't mean to do it again on exit.

However, Roxy's appearance had shaken me so I accidentally stepped on them again. I felt bad of course so I looked down on the still-unconscious warriors. Although it might be useless, I tried to spin an excuse for this situation.

"It was legitimate self-defense. I merely fought back when they attacked me."

"I see... so that's what happened."

Roxy put her hand on her chin as she gave the 8 fallen warriors a glance and nodded. Four of them were still holding their weapons so I thought she'd be able to tell that they had indeed attacked me.

After observing the 8 warriors, she asked the facility staff and heard their stories. I see, not only did she listen to the testimony of those involved, she also did site verification and asked information from a third party.

In this case, it should be proven that I was involved in a scuffle with them and that they attacked me first.

After thinking for quite a while in the corner, Roxy dispersed the staff and finally said "I understand the situation now."

She came, walking towards me. Unlike before, I was calmer now.

I felt something strange when she came next to me.

Ehh!? Was Roxy this small?

Back in the Kingdom, I had to look up a little since our eyes didn't match. But now, I feel that I had to look down slightly.

Could it be that Roxy had shrunk!? No no, that's not it.

Now that I think about it, my clothes do feel shorter than before... I guess I'm growing taller.

I've been constantly fighting to get here, so I didn't really notice. Perhaps it's because my diet has improved and I absorbed a lot of nutrition thanks to that.

When I was still working as a gatekeeper under the Burix family, I had to make do with small meals due to my small salary. After I became Roxy's servant, I was able to eat more delicious meals and now as a warrior, I'm able to eat more nutritious food.

The time when I was with Myne, she tended to squander a lot on meals. Of course, it was all at my expense.

Hmm... or perhaps, I'm just a late bloomer and has now just entered my growth spurt. Well anyways, I'm still 16 years old. No need to rush things.

I see... so now I'm taller than Roxy... while I was still recovering from this surprise,

"Are you listening?"

Roxy called out to me. I replied while pretending to be calm.

"Ah, of course I was listening. So, what is it?"

"So you didn't listen at all!? Good grief... I guess I have to put you in jail too for that."

Uuuuu, anything but the prison, please.

After lightly threatening me, Roxy smiled and apologized.

"Let me ask you again then. What is your name?"

"...Mukuro."

"I see... that's quite a strange name."

Roxy may have guessed that it's not my real name. However, warriors tend to use nicknames according to their work so she didn't pursue it any further.

While I was sighing in relief, she started to explain about this uproar.

"Well, I'll overlook you this time. According to the staff, they deliberately find weak-looking warriors and extort them for money. In addition, the Holy Knights had been absent so they kept doing that for quite a while. What you did was quite raucous actually. Just don't think that there is a part in this place that isn't managed by the kingdom."

"I'm glad to hear that. Then that's it for me."

"Whatever you do next time, please keep it low profile. Also, please replace your clothes as soon as you can. It's... not pleasing for others' eyes."

Roxy blushed when saying so, then moved away from me.

Could it be she considered me a pervert...? Although it's good that I didn't go with my real name, I guess her evaluation for Mukuro had dropped significantly. That's fine, it's a fake name anyways... uuuuuu...

Roxy, who had moved away from me, motioned to the soldiers she had brought along to carry the 8 still-fainted warriors away. Perhaps to the prison. I hope they reflect on

themselves a lot while staying there.

Well, let's leave the facility then.

When I just started walking, Greed talked to me through [mind reading].

[Aya~, I thought I was going to be bald in no time. Because... Fufufufufu! Fate, your acting... was so bad! You were too stiff. So stiff that I might mistake you for adamantite. Instead of Fate Graphite, why don't you change your name to Fate Adamantite?]

“Shaddap.”

[Moreover, you were too rash. It's really hard to watch. It makes this me irritated]

Bastard. This fellow Greed... He was having fun while I was scared shitless from the sudden encounter with Roxy. This guy is really... goddammit.

“Fine, just go on. I won't buy you a new sheath.”

[How dare you say that! That has nothing to do with this. You know, I think watching you acting foolish in front of Roxy was the most enjoyable moment that it might become a great hobby! It's too much fun. Isn't it, Fate?]

“Why do you even ask me? And don't make such a weird hobby.”

In that case, I'll just do better the next time I meet Roxy. Ignoring Greed's rants, I hurried ahead.

Because I want to replace my clothes as soon as possible.

[Ah, Fate. Are you perhaps concerned about what Roxy had told you?]

“.....”

[Hit the nail on the head, huh]

One hundred percent, it was indeed on the mark.

I entered the commercial district and quickly found the shop that sold affordable equipment. I caught sight of black-colored, light clothing being exhibited in a glass case. It'll be very easy to move in it the way I see it.

It also doesn't neglect the defensive stats. The plating seems to be the key point. It was sewn together so exquisitely, showing the effort and time spent to craft it.

Let's try using [Appraisal] on it. It actually has 400 durability. Normal clothing has around 100 durability so it will last much longer.

What to do... the price is 80 gold. I have 103 gold in hand right now so buying it will use up most of it. However, it's not bad.

Greed said to me when I'm about to enter the shop.

[It's black again at the end of the day. Buy something more flashy. Also, what about my sheath?]

"If it's not enough, I will hunt again at noon."

Gallia is overflowing with monsters after all. Making money from it is a no-brainer. It's also convenient for me who's wanting to raise stats.

With that said, Greed was unusually convinced and fell silent. I promise I'll buy it as soon as I can.

I'm going in to the calm and stylish shop. The bell attached to the door rang a pleasant sound.

Then a young man, a good two or three years older than me, appeared from inside the shop.

"Welcome, what are you looking for..."

When he saw me, his eyes looked as if he was staring a plate of fine dish, then he started to stare at my clothes.

What's with this guy!?

It's to be expected to get some customer service here. I never really mind with that, but this young man seemed to be obsessed with my clothing. Face too close, back off!

With a stiff expression, he asked.

"Customer... what kind of situations have you gone through? It's like thrusting yourself

in an ocean of fire... this is a first."

"!?"

This guy... it's as if he could see the battles I've been through just from seeing my equipment...

It's an amazing talent. Too bad, it's not well known yet. Thinking that, I tried to leave the shop.

"Wait a minute."

He had already blocked my path preemptively.

Then he grabbed my hand and asked.

"How about this, can you please wear the equipment from my shop? I'll sell them to you at half price..."

"Half price!?"

"That's right. Half the price."

When I asked why would he do such a thing, he looked frustrated and started to explain the reason.

Chapter 63

Innocent Soul

“My name is Jade Stratos. Errm... an independent equipment craftsman. Well actually it’s only been three months.”

I see. I think I kinda get what Jade wanted to say...

“In other words, you want me to wear your equipment that you haven’t sold yet to advertise it.”

“Yeah, I bet it’ll be very convincing. You’re a very strong warrior, judging from the wear and tear on your clothes. How about it? In exchange for the discount, I only want you to attach this to the equipment.”

Jade took out an emblem with “Stratos Equipment Store” on it from the back drawer. If he sewed that on my clothes, of course people would be able to tell from where I had bought the said clothes.

“But, is it okay if it’s me? What if I’m not the kind of warrior you expect me to be? If I do something terrible in the future, won’t that also affect the reputation of your store?”

For example, caught in conflict with the holy knights, being involved in the fight between the kingdom army and the Tenryu (*TL Note: Heavenly Dragon*), and more bad things started to pop out in my mind.

Jade simply showed an amused look and said.

“Hahaha, why are you anxious about that? Warriors are just that kind of fellow. Those kinds of things are fine. Life for the moment, think about the repercussion later. Arrogant and rough. That’s how the warriors are. It’s somewhat similar to having business with someone who’s about to die”

“It’s similar?”

To that, he said while scratching the bridge of his nose,

“Ee, I just want to be famous. First in Babylon. Then, the whole kingdom. That’s impossible to achieve by merely crafting the best equipment. I need a warrior who is also aiming for the same height to don them in battle... that’s what I want.”

“...I understand. There is really no reason for me to refuse after all. From now on, let’s work together.”

“Yeah, likewise. Please drop the formality, We’re partners now.”

“Right. In that case, I’ll do just that.”

Jade shook my hand. With that, the exclusive contract was established.

So from now on, I’ll be wearing armor crafted by Jade. I couldn’t use any other weapon but Greed. So it’s only armor.

First of all, we’ll be adjusting the displayed black shirt according to my size. After a while, Jade reappeared from the back room with the clothes in hand.

“I’ve decided to do a little extra work on it. What do you think?”

“This... looks good.”

Linings of red fabric had been sewn over the black shirt.

“You can only see the red linings when the shirt is folded. It’s the hidden accent. Please try wearing it immediately.”

“Eh, then”

Amazing... he’s already familiar with my body size in such a short time. It fits comfortably. Very easy to move while wearing it. This person... he’s the real deal. Even if he didn’t meet me now, he’d surely be able to become a famous artisan in the future.

While I was quite overwhelmed by the difference in quality to what I could buy on the kingdom,

“How does it feel?”

“Exceeds my expectations. It’s as if my strength increased just from wearing it.”

“I’ll feel troubled if you praise me too much. How about changing the boots too?”

“Please”

In addition to the boots, he also sold me a belt and thimble, which totaled up to 80 gold, same as the original price of the black shirt.

I finished changing and checked my appearance on the body-tall mirror the shop had set up.

Looks good, if I have to say so myself. Although it’s pure black at first glance, the red linings can be seen on occasion, giving it a good accent.



There will be no problem if I meet Roxy next time. While thinking that, Greed came to complain through **[Mind Reading]**.

[The tailor truly makes the man]

“You... I dare you say that again!”

He said the same thing when I bought a new clothes back at the kingdom... can you praise me even a little?

Jade seemed curious upon seeing such an interaction. Out of habit, I got into a conversation with Greed. To another's eyes, it looks like a weird guy who talks to his black sword one-sidedly.

That was a blunder on my part for doing that right after striking a great contract. While my forehead was sweating bullets,

“Fate really cares for his weapon, don't you? I also talk to the weapons and armor I craft. Well, it's something like what you did. People treat me like a weirdo because of that.”

That's somewhat even stranger than me. Somehow, I've been included under the same category.

About having the conversation with Greed, I'd have to disclose my skills in order to explain it, so I guess I better stop doing it out in the open.

Jade, who considered me a kindred soul, started to talk about various kind of weapons. He then looked at Greed.

“Even so, the sheath looks quite worn out. How about I make you a better one?”

Now what should I do? If I don't prioritize Greed's demand, later on he'll surely annoy me to no end.

When I asked secretly, he said that it would be good to give it a try. It seemed that even Greed admitted to Jade's ability to some extent.

“Then I'll be troubling you”

“Really!? Then, can you let me see the black sword?”

"Yeah, alright."

I drew out Greed from his sheath and showed him to Jade. In response, Jade's face stiffened up, his mouth agape.

"Oi, are you okay?"

I shook his body until Jade returned to his senses. He gave Greed another look as if he wanted to devour it, then calmed down.

"What a... what an exquisite weapon that is. I've never seen a one-handed sword like that before... amazing."

Greed was ecstatic upon hearing that. The fellow who regularly brags about himself, now brags even more, and it only served to annoy me.

[You hear that, Fate! Even that fellow understand it. My godly aura will still overflow even if you try to hide it well! Hahaha, praise me more]

Yosh, to make me feel better, I'll decide the sheath color. I don't want it to be glittery gold, so it will be black to match the rest of my equipment.

However, if I do choose black, I can already see the future where Greed keeps nagging me about it. Even now Greed doesn't really like his old sheath.

I guess it's better to give in a little to his desire right now.

"The sheath should be mainly black, but I wonder if you could decorate it?"

"Black it is. What kind of decoration do you want?"

"Gold decoration. Just a little."

"I see... Got it. I'll make a shiny new sheath for the black sword. However, it's still a business. It will cost quite a lot to make a sheath that can match the sword. You okay with that?"

When I bought my equipment, Jade didn't even consider the expense much. But he actually said so about the crafting of the sheath. Swallowing hard, I asked, anxiously,

“How much... will it cost?”

“Even if I estimated on the low side, it would be no less than 500 gold.”

I coughed on the spot. What the... Why did Greed's sheath actually cost 6 times than that of my own equipment! I don't get it.

Greed said to the reluctant me.

[Buy it. It will be a well spent 500 gold. Jade seems to understand this me to some extent, he'll craft a good one. Considering the amount, it's an acceptable price.]

Already, Greed tried to goad me into buy it. It'll troublesome to refuse him now.

I only had 23 gold left. Given the cost for lodging, I'll have to save 3 gold.

Haa... , I let out a long sigh,

“Do you accept installments? I only have 20 gold at the moment...”

“Of course. I'll take care of the remaining 480 gold temporarily. I wonder if you could pay me back in a week's time?”

After the negotiation concluded, Jade began to measure Greed's dimensions down to every corner. He worked along while continuously leaking admiring sighs.

“Done, I have the necessary information now. Please come back in a week! You can expect the best I've ever crafted up until now.”

“Yeah, I'll be looking forward to it. In the meantime, I'll diligently make money.”

When I got out of Jade's shop, I looked up to the sky while correcting my skull mask. It was already nighttime. Time flew by without me noticing.

Now, what should I do? My wallet's contents had gone down the drain. I wonder if it's okay for me to return to the inn right now.

There should be no problem since the cost for staying is 50 silver for one night. I can afford to not eat anything that costs me extra, like dinner, for instance. The lady proprietress is really good at recommending things, so I have to extra careful. There was already that accident with drinking alcohol yesterday.

Well, I can also do some night hunting for all I care. I used to hunt at night during my time at the kingdom anyways. With [Night Vision] skill, I can hunt normally even if it's a moonless night after all.

But anyways, let's return to the inn. I crossed the main street from the commercial district to the residential district. Occasionally, I came across some drunken warriors walking shoulder to shoulder cheerily. They had a nice harvest apparently.

I hoped that I'd also do well with my new equipment tomorrow.

I arrived at the old brick inn I stayed in, and entered.

"Welcome back! Well, well. Would you look at that."

The lady proprietress greeted me with cheerful voice. She gave me a good look from top to bottom while laughing like a man.

Then, she patted my shoulder.

"These are quite good pieces of equipment. Didn't they cost a lot?"

"Like you said. I was quite taken aback by the pricing in Babylon."

"But you bought them all at once. You're a real warrior, aren't cha?"

"I still have a long way to go, please don't pressure me too much."

The lady proprietress laughed upon hearing that.

"You are hungry, right? Come, let's have dinner. My daughter is also looking forward to have dinner with you."

"Today, I won't drink like yesterday."

"Of course, you don't have to say that out loud."

I was drawn to the dining room. The two daughters were already sitting there, as if waiting for my arrival.

There is a lot of sake on the table... no sign of the expensive liquor I had drunk yesterday though.

All 3 gold of my remaining wealth gone in the wind just like that.

“Now, down to business.”

“Please be gentle with me”

In conclusion... my gold coins disappeared. Fine! Tomorrow I'll hunt monsters vigorously.

I returned to my room and laid down on the bed, closing my eyes. I drank too much... the ceiling felt like it was spinning until my consciousness finally faded into peaceful sleep.

◊ ◊ ◊

I'm standing alone in an unfamiliar world. When I looked up, it's white. Even the ground is also white.

The same scenery continued no matter how long I walked. The more ridiculous thing was I couldn't see the horizon here.

There was nothing but white in this world. My body didn't even cast a shadow.

What... is this place!? Why am I stuck in here!?

When I looked around the area, suddenly... A pure white girl appeared in front of me.

The girl stared at me with her red eyes, laughing in a smile.

[We're finally connected...]

I recognized her.

Yes... that's right. She was the girl that acted as the core of the machine angel Haniel I had fought alongside Myne.

“You're from that time”

She's trying to tell me something, but I couldn't hear her due to the increasingly loud noise.

Still, it felt like it was something important.

I desperately tried to listen. But by doing so, the world around me turned dark.

I tried to get close to her—.

But before that, the world lost its light and I also lost my footing, falling into the abyss.

“Uaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.....”

She could only look at me with a sad face.

As I kept falling and falling into the dark abyss—

What I saw next was the world where human and monsters were piled on top of each other, struggling, suffering, burning in red. There was only one word to represent this view, Hell.

◊ ◊ ◊

“Huff huff huff huff.....”

I woke up sweating heavily all over my body. It was not a good feeling.

What was that? It's... it's just a dream, as strange as it was realistic, but it was still clearly etched in my memory.

The content was too much that I couldn't make up the whole picture, and the feeling when I was falling to that abyss was too gloomy.

Perhaps, it's because I defeated that machine angel Haniel. The dream appeared out of my guilt over killing the little girl.

Now that I think about it, she was... what on Earth did she try to tell me? When I remembered her sad face, I became curious.

Chapter 64

Black and White

A month had passed since then. Up to now, Tenryu* never did cross Gallia border. It did, however, approach several times. (*TL Note: Heavenly Dragon*)

Each time, the gluttony skill would awaken and thrash inside of me. I could only hold on desperately until the Tenryu returned to the center of Gallia.

Still, I won't be able to hold out against the Tenryu. It's certainly not only about my stats. There is something else missing. I couldn't help but to think so.

And so, time went by without me realizing.

“Customer, why the long face?”

That being said, Eris approached the counter where I was sitting. Her bluish hair swayed around as she smiled to me.

I, on the other hand, was quite surprised as I pointed to the mask I wore.

“Even with this, you can still tell what kind of expression I have?”

“I wonder about that? I just know.”

Eris put on a sweet face as she sat next to me. Is this okay? Aren't you still at work? Eris then continued as if to address my thoughts.

“My master is so sweet. He won't get mad at me even if I idle a lot.”

“The shop will be in trouble if you keep doing that.”

While looking around, I saw an unexpected situation.

The people attracted by Eris' Lust skill once again packed the shop today. In the background, the master who actually hated hard work was busily moving around

“Your employer will die at this rate.”

“Ahaha. He said it himself that he won’t let me do such a thing...”

I quickly looked away from staring into Eris’ eyes. It was dangerous... I almost got attracted to her. Eris had aimed when I dropped my guard down, and tried to get in.

“Chi,. Look at my eyes properly.”

“No can do. I will get affected.”

“Just a little bit should be alright, right?”

“No is a no! There is no such thing as ‘just a little bit’.”

If I got attracted to her even a little, it would be the end. The Lust skill was simply that powerful. Well, since the attraction is actually the unintended harmful effect of the Lust skill, she couldn’t actually control it in any way.

Eris and I met quite frequently at this bar, since I don’t need to confront her at all just yet. It’s only because she had told me about the impending crisis that will befall Roxy, and that she will only be a bystander in this matter.

I didn’t completely trust her of course. That’s why I’ve been visiting this bar to check on her.

Ignoring my doubtful look, Eris continued to grin at me.

“Even so, Fate keeps coming to my shop so often. That... troubles me.”

“Don’t get me wrong. I come here not just to see you.”

Whilst saying that, I pushed away the approaching Eris. However, she laughed fearlessly,

“Ah, could it be that you are, that so-called a tsundere type?”

“...Ha!? What are you talking about. If anything, it wouldn’t be to you!”

“Aaaaaaa, how awful”

Eris crumpled to the counter feeling shocked that her performance failed.

While burying her face on her arms, she gave me a glance and said in a low voice.

“I wish you were attracted to me... and acted lovey-dovey to me...”

“That’s scary, you know?”

Before I knew it, Eris had actually gone as far as jumping on me. Are you kidding me... while I was trying to fight off the power of her enchantment, someone coughed from behind me.

When I turned around... there was the lord of the fortress city Babylon–Roxy Heart.

As ever, the white armor suits her dignified look well. Meanwhile, I had a girl grinding her cheek on me.

“Enjoying yourself? Mister Mukuro?”

“Ah, about this...”

I peeled off Eris who was boo-ing at me, and pushed her to the side. She seemed to be not liking being pushed like that, so she took my wine and drink it without permission... Before it's Myne, and now Eris. Why do I keep coming across girls that loved to snatch my possessions without my agreement?

Well, whatever. That's not my concern right now. Anyways, why does Roxy is here?

I turned toward Roxy,

“Alright then, what do you want from me?”

“Ee, quite a lot to be honest. Don’t you know about it already?”

“Not really”

I already know? Nothing really came to mind actually. However, from the way she looked, that didn't seem to be the case.

As I was twisting my neck and fixing my skull mask positioning, Roxy sighed while receiving a letter from the soldier following behind her.

"56 cases of violence to other warriors, 21 cases of property damage. All those in only one month. Unbelievable."

Aaaaahh, those things..... it's become something that regularly happened everyday, that it barely crossed my mind. I even made short work of several warriors before coming here.

"It can't be helped. They like me so much, they actually attacked me every single day. It's not like they'd listen if I tried to talk it out with them. Even you understand that, right?"

"Certainly there are a lot of such warriors in Babylon."

"Un un, that's right! They attack me like ants finding sugar."

"However, as I said before, I cannot condone your violence."

Could it be, you want to put me in jail? Give me a break... I was having a relaxing drink at the bar, and you want to arrest me just like that?

Smiling under the skull mask, I saw Roxy shaking her head.

"Do you know why the other warriors kept targeting you?"

"Because they like me too much?"

"Wrong! It's because you don't belong to any party. For normal people, it's hard to attack you individually, so naturally they grouped up to make it work. That's why, rather than working alone, why don't you join some party?"

"That way, will the unnecessary conflict cease?"

I can understand what Roxy is trying to tell me. There were always at least five warriors coming to attack me at the same time. Never did I have a one-on-one fight.

In other words, it'll be easier to keep them in check if I belonged to a group instead of doing things by myself.

Roxy continued to talk while nodding.

"So I have a proposal for you."

She received another letter from the soldier, and handed it to me.

When I spread the letter and read it, I found something unexpected written there.

“This is...”

“Ehm, what do you think? For someone as strong as you are, we can hire you as a mercenary under the king’s army. That way, those pesky warriors will not be able to touch you.”

“Oh~, so you’re trying to buy me”

Hearing that, Roxy cleared her throat, looking troubled.

“I’m just feeling vexed. You were able to completely rout a stampede all by yourself. That has been confirmed by the exchange facility. It’s no doubt that you are a skilled person. At the moment, my priority is to strengthen the fighting force of the king’s army. Moreover, I personally think that it’s best to put a leash on people like you.”

Right, right. Babylon is indeed a bit too wild. Even I am considered as a dangerous person by Roxy. I smiled bitterly under the skull mask.

“I’m not a dog.”

“Right... My apologies. I used the wrong words. The way I see it... you seem to live in a hurry for something.”

Even now Roxy was still thinking about me. However, I won’t live under her protection anymore. I had decided so when I left the Heart family mansion.

And there was also that problem with the holy knight named Norden. If he found out that I joined the king’s army, he’d definitely come up with some trouble. Moreover, since he’d technically be my boss, I wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

Being able to move freely is the best after all.

“Thank you for your concern, but I do not belong anywhere.”

Roxy thought about something for a short while upon hearing my answer, but smoothly accepted it.

“Understood. Somehow, I had expected that kind of answer. Then, would you mind going out with me for a while?”

Roxy pointed outside as she said so. Did she mean to get out?

This... she didn't need to explain what that meant. I could somewhat tell since the air around her had changed.

“What if I refuse?”

“Then you'll reflect on your past deeds in the district prison. That would be no good for you, right? I myself, am a little curious about your prowess, warrior Mukuro.”

Roxy walked out of the bar. Well, well, I wanted to avoid this if possible, but I guess it's impossible now.

Why did I have to cross swords with Roxy? That said, Eris was waving at me.

“It has become interesting somehow. I can only cheer, but do your best.”

“You are drunk, aren't you?”

“I'm just a bystander, remember?”

She's right. That's why she didn't butt in when I was talking with Roxy. She just stayed there grinning and smiling... what a nice personality.

And so, I put my hand on the black sword's handle.

[This has become interesting, Fate!]

“Even you say the same thing!”

[Hahahahaha, this me is a bystander too. I'm just a weapon, after all. Now go quickly. Otherwise Roxy will be in a bad mood, and you'll end up spending the night in jail]

Don't joke around like that! I followed Roxy out of the bar. It would be a bit unreasonable if it's just for a simple bout. I don't care, but I have to do it anyways.

Chapter 65

The Black Sword and the Holy Sword

When I stepped outside the bar, I found Roxy standing in the middle of a crowd, forming a circle around her.

So as not to disturb us, the soldiers kept the people in order with their horses. It was a quite an elaborate setup.

I could only think that this was her intention from the start. To me, who only had known her from back when were together in the kingdom, this was actually quite surprising.

Fighting in front of the crowd...? Of course this wasn't a first for me. I could do it without blinking. It's just that the opponent this time was Roxy. Shouldn't be any different from all those warriors I've fought with before.

This was intolerable.

However, it didn't seem that I could escape either.

Once again, I sighed.

I made sure that the skull mask was attached firmly so that it wouldn't fall off during battle, then put some strength into my feet and jumped. I leapt over the crowd and landed in front Roxy.

Face-to-face, I complained,

“Such a big deal”

“Is that so? I just thought that you wouldn't accept unless I did this much.”

You understand me well... However, what about your position as the ruler of this fortress city?

“We are in front of many people. What will happen to me if, say, you lose?”

“No need to worry. I don't really care that much about that happening. Not that I intend

to lose, either.”

Roxy drew out her sword while looking straight at me.

Being looked at that way, a sense of despair rose up within me. Shaking that feeling off, I raised Greed up without drawing him out from the sheath.

Roxy frowned at this spectacle.

“Are you going to fight me just using the sheath? That’s a terrible joke.”

“No, I’m serious. I’ll fight as is. My sword’s edge is a little too dangerous for a fight like this.”

I had the black sword still sheathed. The sheath itself was crafted by Jade Stratos who signed the exclusive contract for supplying me with equipment. It was black with golden trims.

Incorporating the golden trims wasn’t actually because it matched with Greed’s sense of fashion. It was something Jade had added on a whim. When we had heard about his idea, Greed and I could only feel impressed by his talent.

Facing against me with her holy sword poised, Roxy seemed hesitant.

“I don’t know if the sheath breaks”

Normally I would think the same. However, this sheath can handle this much.

In fact, it’s tough enough to endure attacks from a holy sword.

“Well, shall we begin?”

“Very well. I don’t intend to hold back against you. Shall we?”

“Yeah...”

We quickly approached each other. I wonder, what exactly Roxy’s fighting prowess is. I could easily check her stats and skills through Appraisal. But I don’t want to resort to such cheats.

I can’t do that since she seriously wanted to fight me. I can only respond to Roxy’s will, sword against sword.

Greed snorted, then talked to me via **[mind reading]**.

[You aren't a knight, yet you act so chivalrously? Laughable]

"Shut up"

I ignored Greed's taunting, and crossed swords with Roxy.

The noise of metal clashing filled the air. Surprisingly, my feet were pushed into the ground.

Her attack was heavier than expected! Roxy's sword attacks resumed, becoming heavier with every strike, that finally the cobblestone cracked, creating a small crater.

"Ku... you don't pull any punches, do you?"

"Didn't I tell you? I don't intend to hold back."

Having little choice, I pushed away Roxy's sword. She jumped back in response to that. The strength behind her strikes was no joke. It's not something coming from a skill.

It was from training. She must've constantly been training to be able to make use of her stats to the limit. I never saw her do that while she was on the mansion grounds, so it's must've been when she went to the military district.

Now then, I think I'm better than Roxy in term of stats. But when it comes to controlling it, that's a different story.

Normally, human will level up and gain status as they continue to defeat monster and hone themselves. Therefore, it's rare for a warrior to be unable to control their stats. They can always control their stats to a certain extent, and beyond that... is practicing to draw out their maximum limit.

It's totally different in my case. I'll continue to gain stats as I keep killing monsters. For such a sudden growth, the experience and skill required to control it were overwhelmingly low.

There are loopholes that will allow me to control it altogether, but... they're uncomfortable to use at best. By entering a semi-starving state, not only do I gain a boost in my physical abilities, I'll also be able to use my stats to the utmost limit.

However, there was a danger as a price to use it... I had to kill my opponent. That's why it's almost useless during a fight where I don't want to kill anyone—I'm perfectly aware that it's dangerous to use it during a sparring session.

Even more so now, since my opponent is Roxy.

And then, when I was thinking about that sweet little nothing, Roxy had recovered and launched another attack.

“What are you doing, we are in the middle of battle”

“Just thinking a little”

“I’m amazed. Now, would you be a little more motivated if I do this?”

That’s foul... no, that’s not what I mean, I want you to stop.

Roxy deliberately targeted my skull mask.

“I will remove that haunting mask”

Adding to that, she’s moving faster than before. Although I didn’t get careless, it did take me aback for a moment. If I don’t fight back, the skull mask will be cut in two.

Twisting my body, Roxy’s sword only managed to hit the air, as I managed to evade her attack.

Fuu~... I just took a brief moment to catch a breath. But my ears immediately caught unpleasant sound.

There was a crack in the skull mask.

In panic, I used **[appraisal]** to check the durability.

Skull Mask Durability: 10/20 Prevents the person equipped with it from recognition, fabricating the user as another person.



UAAAAAAAAAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. The durability is halved!

Did the sword manage to nick it!?

It was an antique item in the first place, perhaps that's why it's so fragile. No, Roxy's attack was so sharp. If it received another attack, it would definitely break...

Thinking so, cold sweat began running down my spine.

"What's the matter? Your movement has become dull. Do you want your identity to be exposed that badly?"

"Tha, that's not... it..."

"You are very upset. Why... Isn't that strange? Come on, I've really wanted to see your face."

Roxy smiled and laughed like a naughty kid. That's the face that I knew of.

With my inner thoughts racing quickly and whilst protecting the skull mask, I told Roxy.

"Wawait. I'll take you seriously now..."

"Why of course you have to. Now then, please come at me seriously. Otherwise, just leave that mask here."

Well, she's right. I've had my head in the clouds for a little too long.

I couldn't easily get rid of the feeling of familiarity I had for Roxy. Those sweet memories made me careless, and that carelessness actually cost me a crack on the skull mask.

I guess, unlike Myne and Aaron, I'm still unable to let go of these feelings after all?
...whatever. Regardless of how I feel, I still have to face this girl.

"If that's your wish, then it can't be helped"

I infused magic power into my sheathed sword. The sheath then started to release sacred light.

Roxy who saw it was surprised.

“You... that power!?”

“Yes, it’s the Holy Sword skill as you may have guessed...”

This is the technique that I learned from Aaron, keeping the effect of **[Grand Cross]** by cancelling it mid-activation.

The sheath that Jade had crafted has a special function where it allows me to use the holy sword mastery technique, which had been gathering dust since I was unable to utilize it.

Oh well... I didn’t actually plan to show off in front of a lot of people. But it’s a good opportunity.

If Roxy knows that I can use the Holy Sword skill, she won’t think that I’m Fate Graphite. After all, in her eyes, Fate Graphite was someone she needed to protect.

“A technique that can handle arts so well. Are you a knight... no, are you a former Holy Knight?”

“No, I never was a Holy Knight. From the beginning, I’ve always been just a wandering swordsman.”

With more magic power poured into it, the black sword shone with more radiance as I charged toward Roxy. In this kind of battle, there was no need for mundane things like tactics. Plain and simple: show your confidence in your own power.

Chapter 66

Memories of the Pendant

I put enough power to break Roxy's sword with this blow.

More than anything, I fear that the bored soldiers will join the battle if it gets prolonged. It'll be bad for her, and it will also be impossible for us to continue the fight. However, as if trying to go against my speculation, she accepted my strike with her holy sword.

The crowd went silent due to their surprise when the two weapons clashed.

The warriors who couldn't help loving me so much would probably be laughing in glee if they saw me getting pushed back like this. Yes, it was that hard of a blow I had taken just now.

Roxy had added something to her attack, and it's obvious to tell from its appearance alone. She had imbued the effect of [Grand Cross] into her holy sword just like I had.

I guess she too obtained some experience on her way from the kingdom to Babylon, and it caused a major growth in her ability as well.

Roxy laughed quite loudly.

"That's too bad"

"Chi, however..."

I still have to try. It's not over yet.

I will definitely push her back this time. If it's just mere power to power colliding, my strength should be above hers.

The black sword and the holy sword clashed once more. Drops of perspiration started to appear on Roxy's face as she exerted a huge amount of power I never thought she had. However, I still managed to push her holy sword back.

"Kyaah..."

I didn't expect her to let out such a lovely voice, and it made me feel slight guilt. Even for the crowd who were watching the battle started booing at me.

To them, I'm evil. Scarcely anyone will think of me as a good guy as long as I wear this skull mask anyways.

I should end this immediately. I kicked the ground as hard as I could, and jumped to the building behind Roxy.

Now that her stance had collapsed, I swung the sword in my hand to end the battle.

At that moment, a blue jeweled pendant emerged from under her breastplate.



That's!?!..... I couldn't move any further.

She had kept it properly...

That blue jewel was a gift I presented to Roxy after we finished inspecting the city together when I was still working with her.

I still remember vividly that she promised to take good care of it after processing the jewel into a pendant. And even now, she still kept it...

I lost focus of the battle, and even though Greed warned me via [mind reading] , it's already too late.

Roxy managed to recover while still in the air, while I swung my sword sluggishly.

I started to think that it was a terribly stupid move. Greed cried [You huge idiooooooot] when I was on the verge of letting him go. He certainly had a point, to lose focus during a battle was foolish.

Joining the crowd just now was Eris, who was watching and laughing gaudily. I bet I would never hear the end of it the next time I visit the bar.

As my sword fell down from the air and stuck into the pavement, I could already imagine Greed lecturing me like an annoying sister due to this. Thus I hesitated to pick him up immediately...

Looking up, there was the pointy tip of Roxy's sword. It was decided.

I raised my hands, signifying my surrender.

Roxy seemed dissatisfied as she lowered her sword. She then put the pendant back under her uniform as if it was something precious.

Sighing, she approached me, still holding my hands up.

“Why did you hesitate just now?”

“It was an accident... nothing much...”

“I see. It's nice to win, but it's not a satisfying battle. Would you want to have a private rematch?”

“...please spare me from that”

I simply couldn't fight her after all. I understand this very well from this meeting.

“It's enough. It'll be rude if it's more than this.”

“Ah, please wait a moment”

Ignoring Roxy, I got up and retrieved Greed back. And of course, Greed immediately said something via **[mind reading]**.

[Disappointing]

“Uh, shut up”

What he said was still within my expectation. But let's get out of here before hearing him out.

Roxy and I had made an agreement. I won't need to go to the prison.

The loser simply needs to go. There is no merit in staying here.

However, Roxy stopped me. She even stood there, blocking my way.

“There is one last thing I want to ask you.”

“Not done yet?”

“Where did you learn swordsmanship? Your style is similar to that of Aaron Barbatos'. Your footwork, also the way you swing your sword.”

I wonder what's wrong. Suddenly, her face turned really serious.

As such, Roxy continued.

“On my way to Babylon, I met Aaron Barbatos while he was in the middle of rebuilding the devastated Hausen city. He was a former Holy Knight. He told me that he choose to take up his sword again after meeting a certain man.”

Roxy stared at me as she said so.

Anyways, did she just say she met Aaron? Moreover, it's after Aaron and I had finished

liberating Hausen from the undeads. That means if I had chosen to stay there a little longer, I would've met Roxy much earlier.

Well, we're heading to the same direction. So it's only normal for her to come across Aaron too.

To my surprise, she offered me a hand. But I refused. Because once we made contact, [Mind Reading] can affect her.

"Aaron did not tell me that man's name. But he told me that this man had left for Gallia. And I was also told about this; that the man's body contained a power that made him suffer. If you are that person... then I..."

"I don't know, and even if that person was me, that'd be my problem. It's not something you should care about. In Gallia, you should think about protecting yourself first."

As always, she's too gentle. Even when the danger is approaching...

Even so, I was saved by that kindness. If I didn't meet her, I would've been swallowed by the Gluttony skill, losing my ego and turning into a rabid monster who attacks anyone without regard.

"..... you haven't changed at all, have you? Still as straightforward as ever..."

Those words I let out unintentionally were drowned under the noise of the siren that resounded all over Babylon.

What... is this. The crowd around us started to make a fuss.

This is the first time I heard that siren ever since I arrived in Babylon. But unlike me, everyone else seemed to know already the meaning of this siren.

Apparently, so did Roxy. I could almost feel that heavy air coming from her.

I understood this feeling... I stared toward the southern part of the city. The dark clouds were approaching from the direction of Gallia.

A male holy knight suddenly barged in, breaking through the crowd alongside several warriors. That man had long, silky golden hair. He was Norden Alistair.

Chapter 67

Death March

When he noticed me, Norden showed slight surprise on his face as he walked toward Roxy.

“Roxy-sama, a large scale stampede from Gallia is approaching the border.”

Hearing the report from Norden, Roxy replied with a calm attitude as if the sword fight just now never happened,

“Is it a death march?... How big?”

“About 15,000 or so. A rather small number for a death march.”

“...understood. What is the estimated time until they reach the border?”

“With their current speed, approximately 4 hours.”

“Before that happens, we’ll intercept them in Gallia. How is the preparation going...”

Roxy gave me a quick nod as she talked to Norden, signaling that I could leave.

She’s now moving to lead the army to stop the death march. That is, after all, why Roxy came here in the first place.

I refused to join the military as their mercenary, so I couldn’t join her.

By the way, that wasn’t what I was concerned about. When I glanced at Roxy’s side,

“Cheh, that bastard...”

My eyes met with Norden’s, and at that moment he turned to me with a grin on his face.

I really have no idea what that means. Whether it is ‘are you coming or not?’... or ‘Surprisingly you are a coward, eh?’... or something like ‘nice taste for a warrior, or

none of above.

Anyways it's the bad kind of smile.

Roxy, Norden, and the soldiers had left, leaving me standing there alone. The crowd that was watching had also dispersed, thanks to the siren.

Meanwhile. Greed told me through [Mind Reading] skill.

[Fate, what are you going to do?]

"Isn't already decided? Besides, I'm hungry."

[So you are going...]

When I finally also walked away, only Eris was left there.

She had her eyes on me with a sense of longing in her gaze. She had promised me to not involve herself, but when I looked back, she had that shy expression on her face.

I'm in a hurry, but...

"What's wrong... don't give me that kind of face."

When I approached her, Eris backed off instead, keeping some distance between us.

Then, she advised me with a low voice.

"You'd better not go."

"Since Eris said that, then I need to go even more so..... thank you, for worrying about me."

".....because it's bad to be always unreasonable."

She went back into the bar without looking back. Eris did say that she'd remain neutral. So even if she told me that it's going to be dangerous, I really had no idea what kind of danger it would be.

Even so, it's still a precious piece of information. I'll have to thank that girl for being trustworthy. Let's just keep that in mind for now.

That death march, is certainly not a normal kind of death march.

Well, let's just go. While walking, I asked Greed.

"Can I ask you something?"

[At a time like this? What is it?]

"Greed is one of the Mortal Sins, so you can sense if there is another Mortal Sin weapon nearby, right?"

[Yes, but there is none in Babylon other than me. Why do you ask all of a sudden? Something like this never bothered you before]

That's right. I had never asked about this before.

If by any chance there is another mortal sin skill holder around here, I don't want to think about the possibility of them being hostile to me.

It's because I have no confidence in fighting some extraordinary person, like Myne for instance, on my own. However, I can't stay leisurely anymore.

With Roxy's death, the hate within regular folks will well up and trigger the creation of the new kind of human being much like how the crown type monsters are made. If I were to believe Eris' words, there was someone else who believed it as well. It could be a mortal sin skill user, or something else.

And that person is here, in Babylon.

In response to my premonition, Greed told me.

[In this Babylon, there is only you and Eris. I sensed nothing else.]

"Ee, really!?"

[That's right... However, there is the possibility that they deliberately concealing themselves. As long as they aren't as half baked as you are, it'd be possible. It's the same case with Eris. I wouldn't even notice her if she didn't make herself known to us.]

That doesn't seem so good. Still, the time is steadily ticking. Do I really have the time

to worry about something I can't see just yet?

As I tightened my left fist, Greed added in through **[mind reading]**.

[Well, at least I can be a little bit at ease]

“What’s with that, so sudden”

[Fate, you’ve realized that letting that woman get out of sight might prove to be dangerous. I guess you’ve grown up a little.]

“Don’t treat me like a child forever. Even I know that there are things that I have to be careful about other than Tenryu.”

Perhaps, she’s even more annoying than Tenryu could be. Greed laughed at that thought of mine.

[Ahahahahahah, in my eyes, you are still no different than a newborn baby.]

Yeah, yeah, you are a 4000-year-old geezer. It must’ve been such a very long time, that his mind got twisted a little. Poor Greed...

[Oi, Fate]

“What is it?”

[Don’t be reckless]

“You say that just now?.”

From back then, when I was working in the Heart mansion... from the moment I knew about the price I had to pay for having the Gluttony skill, I guess I haven’t changed that much, have I? At least the Gluttony skill is stable at the moment.

“It should be okay this time. I know what to do.”

[Well, you are right.]

I passed through several warriors along the way as I walked to the main street. They were running towards the northern gate all decked up in extravagant equipment.

They are probably aiming for the leftovers from the Kingdom military forces led by Roxy. It's a great opportunity to earn some money.

As I adjusted the skull mask, I looked at the military district in the south. Greed asked me through **[mind reading]**.

[What's wrong, Fate? The exit is in the opposite direction]

"I'm okay. Let's go"

A huge wave of military personnel, warriors, and merchants were in a rush.

This is good, but I prefer the path where there is no one else.

The military district is currently very crowded due to the death march, I guess the big players have also started moving.

"I'll take a super shortcut"

[I see]

Taking advantage of my strength, I made a huge leap and landed on the rooftops. It appeared that Greed could read my intention.

[So you're planning to go to the south via the rooftops, then go beyond the adamantine wall, towards Gallia]

"Exactly!"

However, I won't go straight to Gallia. I will watch how the situation unfolds first.

The King's Army is the main character here. If it's only a simple death march, the army led by the nobles should be enough to handle it. They have made preparations for it after all. In addition, Roxy is strong.

What I should do, is to identify and act before any accidents can occur.

When I arrived there, the wind was blowing stronger than I thought, as if it could blow me away at any time.

The south... clusters of black clouds seemed to be approaching from Gallia.

Although it's still in the distance, I could still clearly see them... a huge group of 15,000

strong monsters.

“Looks awesome.”

[This will be your first time facing a death march. So, keep this in mind. Don’t try to kill a large amount of monsters at once. The sudden surge of stat growth may possibly awaken Gluttony or make you crazy.]

“Yeah, I’ll be careful. Sorry about that time.”

A bad memory resurfaced in my mind. It was from back when I was still in the Heart’s family territory, a crown type—the time when I fought the assault goblin, the first monster I’d fought that had a proper title.

It was nice to be able to defeat it. By eating a strong soul that I’d never eaten before, my stats rose up greatly, but in exchange, the gluttony skill ran amok within me.

I was struggling so hard to maintain my conscience, even to the point of hitting my head on a rock... it was truly a bad memory.

If the same thing happened in the midst of battle, being surrounded by monsters, it’ll take less than the blink of an eye for me to go to the world beyond.

I’ve tried to train myself to resist it, but just as Greed said, eating thousands of monster at once will be foolish.

Well, I’ll leave that to the King’s army. I won’t fight the death march head on.

After a while, the King’s army emerged from Babylon. Of course Roxy was among them. Leading the army from atop a white horse. Predicting where the death march will most likely pass through, they headed out to the border.

From the arrangement, I think they planned to use magicians’ and archers’ ranged attacks to cut down enemies’ number. Then they’ll clean up the remaining monsters in close combat afterward.

With that number, some crown tier monsters are bound to be mixed within. It’ll be Roxy’s role to defeat them... as only the holy knights have enough power to contend with them.

Greed said to warn me.

[It will begin soon]

“Let’s go now so we can join in at any given time.”

I drew out the black sword and turned it into bow form.

This whole month, I didn’t actually kill monsters randomly. I’ve been training on how to draw out Greed’s potential to the fullest.

Chapter 68

Power to Change

After a while, the monster horde coming from the south finally came in contact with the waiting frontline of the King's army.

The monsters mainly consisted of the green skinned orcs. There were also several monsters with proper titles among them though. But aside from Roxy, there were a lot of other holy knights participating in the battle, so I don't think I'm going to need to intervene.

There was no reaction from the Gluttony skill either. So there was probably no considerable threat on that battlefield at the moment.

With a sigh of relief, I oversaw Roxy's battle from atop of high wall, until Greed warned me of enemy sign approaching from the east.

[Something is closing in rapidly toward where the King's army and the death march are]

“!? But there is nothing there...”

Looking at the direction Greed told me about, I saw nothing but the vast wilderness. I guess I can't see it.

“Is it strong?”

[Yes, it is]

“In that case, I guess we won't end up missing out some kills.”

If I can't see it, then I just need to look for it.

If it's really strong, there must be more to it.

If it's something like the machine angel's barrier, then I would have no other choice but to go.

[I told you not to be reckless, but I guess you won't listen.]

"I thought you'd already get used to it by now? Well, let's get started."

I took a deep breath and calmed my mind, making my decision.

Even if it's invisible to the eye, I'll still eat it... Forcibly invoking Gluttony skill, I marched in with intention to kill.

My left eye was burning hot. It's the sign that I have successfully awakened the Gluttony skill and entered semi-starving state.

[It seems that you can handle it better than before.]

"It's thanks to the training Greed has taught me."

[Fuhn, if it's not because of me, I doubt that you can get this far]

Even under this state, my mind remained calm, so it should be alright. It'll be okay as long as it's just a short battle like before.

I looked toward the east with my eye that can see the magic flow now

"This is..."

Something huge was inside the earth... swimming deep under the ground. It was moving in such a graceful manner as if it's swimming in water instead of hard ground.

I wanted to use appraisal skill, but it's still out of range.

Additionally, I looked around to see if there are more of it coming. But apparently, that's the only one.

I redirected my line of sight back to the underground enemy. If it keeps going, it will slipped right under where the King's army is. Can they detect it with the battle still raging right in front of them?

I don't think they can. Even if I try to inform them, they won't have enough time to respond properly. Death will come from under their feet before they could do anything.

And with size that huge, it will certainly do massive damage to the King's army.

"I'll stop it before that happens."

[Already so eager when it's just the beginning. There is no need to get too absorbed in battle.]

Certainly, I felt unusual heat and pressure different from that of usual battles.

But as Greed said, it's not good to be too absorbed in battle. Worst case scenario, it could've loosened my control over the Gluttony skill.

"Let's use 'that'"

[Ho... so you want to try 'that' out? Very well.]

To attack that creature deep in underground, I'll have to use the secret ability of the black bow—but it will take 10% of my total stats. Meanwhile, I want to preserve as much stats as I can.

For that reason, we created an alternative technique. And I have to be under semi-starving state in order to use it.

I got the idea from when I was fighting the undeads on Hausen alongside Aaron. At that time, thanks to the influence of Gluttony skill, Aaron managed to break his level limit.

I reckoned I could use this phenomenon to my own skill. Influence an offensive skill with Gluttony skill, for example, archery skill. Then, mutates the arts of that skill, allowing Greed to forcibly imbue it on the magic arrow.

And just like that... a mutated version of Charged Shot... **[Spiraling Charged Shot]** was created.

Charged Shot is an art that can double the range of the bow. The mutated version Spiraling Charged Shot, is able to increase the range even further the more magic power I accumulated, and in addition to that, dramatically increase the arrow penetration power too.

[So you forcefully mutate the skill I can't normally use, making it usable for me, thus increasing its power and effectiveness... that sounds interesting alright]

“I can’t always rely on Greed’s poor economy and unreasonable cost after all.”

[You just had to say that, didn’t you?]

That’s why I’ll just show it. It’s not just all talk after all.

Now that I had my red eye, I could grasp the enemy position even if it’s underground as if it’s swimming on my palm.

I took aim and put in magical power. The black arrow started to discharge similarly colored lightning.

Still not enough. I infused more magic power into the black bow. Crackling noise started to sound, and my hands which held the bow began to feel numb. It’s almost... there.

Now, before it swam beyond my line of sight.

Release the magic arrow that was teeming with my magic power!

It broke the sound barrier many times, cutting through the air, drawing a black line eastward. Then it penetrated the earth, disappearing into the ground without slowing down.

After a while, the ground trembled immensely. Just when I thought that it had settled down, the ground where the arrow had pierced through rose up, followed by an explosion not unlike that of volcanic eruption

And there, whilst scattering rocks and soils, a blue translucent huge whale emerged out.

“Did you see that? I fished that out!”

[Hahahahahaha、 today’s a feast!]

“That’s right, you’ll never catch something like this on normal fishing spot”

I hadn’t managed to kill it yet. I had to stop it before it escaped back into the ground.

I jumped off the adamantite outer wall, then immediately kicked on the surface to leap a huge distance towards the east.

Whilst in the middle of landing, I accidentally laughed. Greed then asked me about that via **[mind reading]**.

[What's the matter? Suddenly giggling like that.]

"Nothing... it's just that, in the old days, I would never thought that it was possible to jump off from such a tall place and survive"

[If you don't get used to this kind of thing quickly, you'll only embarrass me. I guess for the you right now, it's actually something important.]

"I know that already."

Demonstrating my strength and agility, I simultaneously jumped and started running as I made my landing.

The translucent whale is still jumping in the air.

There was still a 500m distance between us, so it would take dozen of steps before I got there. Thinking that while tightening my grasp on the black bow, I hurried on.

Good, now I'm within the range. Looking up to the sky, I activated **[Appraisal]**.

"Let's see what are you exactly."

I couldn't hide the surprise in my face as I looked to the display before my eyes. What kind of enemy is this...

In response to that, Greed told me.

[Well, it's common in Gallia]

"Really..."

I can understand if it's a crown tier with proper title. But, it's actually better than that.

Had it grown so big because there are lots of food in the vast Gallia?

The monsters I knew up to now seemed cute compared to this.

Let's confirm the stats of the unexpected enemy once again.

Chapter 69

The Invisible Violator of the Earth

(One who Violates the Earth)

Omega Slime Lv 440

Durability: 13360000

Strength: 9760000

Magic: 11983000

Spirit: 11248000

Agility: 5347000

Ability: **Corrosion Magic, Strength Strengthening**

If it gets to big, it'll look cute. It as if it was trying to make that statement clear.

It can change its form to anything it liked. Currently it looked like a whale because that form made it easier to 'swim' underground.

Its level was quite high. In addition to that, it had over 10 million in stats.

It would be like battling against a holy knight. Besides, I felt an unusual pressure from this crown tier monster.

As it flew in the sky, Omega Slime's body started to swell.

Greed loudly said through **[Mind reading]**.

[Switch to the Demonic Shield! Quick!]

As told, I quickly switched to shield form, and just right then, the omega slime sprayed out a huge amount of liquid from its body.

It fell down like rain thanks to gravity pull.

As per Greed's advice, I used the black shield as a makeshift umbrella. The rain fell so hard it transformed the ground.

“Oioi... this is”

I survived thanks to Greed. Even with my stats, that attack wasn't something that I could endure.

The ground around me had melted into mud after the rain stopped.

[It's strong acid. To think it will spew forth acid from the get go... that's unexpected]

“You could've told me in advance.”

[I thought you already know, it's a common knowledge that a slime body is made of]

“That's right... but I didn't know it can be used like this. And this strange smell too.”

The melting ground smelled horrible. This rotten odor is very nauseating.

Could this be... From the gap on the black shield, I used **[Appraisal]** to the corrosion magic the Omega Slime possessed.

Corrosion Magic: Corrosion attribute can be added to physical attack. Any object touched will rot.

Such a brutal skill. Perhaps this skill was used in conjunction to the acidic fluid it ejected from its body.

That's why the earth had been corroded to such an unthinkable condition.

I see... the omega slime used this same combination to be able to ‘swim’ through the ground by melting rocks and ground.

In that case, close range battle is impossible. If its' body breaks due to Black sword or black scythe attack, the acidic fluids will pour on me, and what's left of me will only be muds without even a bone intact.

“It's a troublesome monster”

[There are a lot of enemies you can't beat by stats alone. How about it, you've learned a good lesson today]

“How high and mighty you are...”

I switched the prideful Greed back into bow form as the omega slime began to descent. Against such a thing, I'll have to clean up nicely. Now, what to use...

"Let's end this quickly. Take 10% of my stats."

[Oya? I thought you wanted to save up?]

Greed said that while grinning deviously. He almost sounded like a shady merchant.

"Shaddap. Come on now."

[Well, I don't understand why you're being impatient. Very well, I'll take it]

The omega slime wriggled its body in midair, trying to align its body to my position. It's attempting to crush me with its colossal body. Its' body was oozing with acid again.

It's only natural for me to be impatient.

Greed began to absorb my stats. It felt disgusting no matter how many times I've experienced it. It's like power was being drained from the inside of my body.

Greed didn't care about what I felt of course. His form started to morph into something more violent.

The black bow that used to simple looking, now grew larger with a monstrous look.

I'm already quite familiar with this first form's secret transformation. It's just that, as the user, I couldn't get used to it since I had to bear the cost to have it transform.

I entered my stance firmly, and took aim at the omega slime above me.

Black flames swirled around the magic arrow——I've added flame attribute onto it. With this I should be able to burn off every strong acidic fluids that scatters about.

Now that I'm in semi-starving state, I can see the magic flow within the omega slime's body. To be clear, its weak point.

I'll shoot it down.

While scattering red sparks, the magic arrow turned into a flash of light and pierced the omega slime.

Along with blazing explosion, a huge amount of vapor covered the view.

Perhaps those came from the omega slime body which evaporated instantly.

I knew that it hit. However.....

[Did we make it?]

“Yes, it hit, but... it seems like it deliberately got hit”

[Wahahahahahah, I told you already, didn’t I?]

It that attack killed it, I should’ve heard the inorganic voice announcing my rising stats and the skill I’ve obtained.

But since I’ve heard none, then it can only means that the omega slime is still alive.

But first let’s move away from this position. I kicked the ground and did a huge back step. Just a moment afterward, an immense translucent blue sphere dropped on where I was previously at.

At the same time, the ground is melting, causing a huge hole.

“Chi... so there is such a thing.”

[So it divided itself prior to taking the hit. I see, it used the separated part as a shield. That’s what the arrow had actually hit.]

“Has it dove back into the underground?”

[However, omega slime only has 1 core. You only need to hit it without being deceived by its’ separated part.]

“Easy for you to say.”

If I tried to shoot the core directly like before, it’ll just use body separation again.

In that case, I have to either try to close in, or use an attack strong enough to pierce both body all at once.

"If that's what it takes, forget 10%, I'll have to sacrifice at least 20% of my stats."

[Fate really is fated to be poor. He's even stingy in a weirdest thing.]

"Shut up"

Where has the omega slime gone anyways?

I tried following the magic flow on the ground... dammit.

"I don't know why, but it's actually ignoring me and continue heading to the west."

[Umu, there is the King's army over there.]

I nodded as I turned westward. It wasn't running away from me. It's aiming for the king's army right from the start.

Even though it's a crown tier who supposedly have a high level of intelligence, why do it act that way?

I wonder... its way of fighting is not something intuitive nor instinctive. It's like... it smells like human.

I reverted Greed back into sword form and put it back into the sheath. So it's like this.

I jumped into the air, and activated **[Grand Cross]** as I landed back on the ground.

At that point, 3 bodies of omega slime jumped out from the ground.

Purified by the sacred light.

[A surprise attack]

"Yeah, let's pretend we lost interest to it, while still aims true. This nasty bitch' craftiness is no different from a sly demon."

[Eris already said this to you before. Don't be reckless.]

That's right. But let's go ahead. It'll be bad if that thing get a jump on the King's army. I went out to the west while periodically using **[Grand Cross]** as an annoyance to the omega slime.

Chapter 70

Black Bullet

Even if I could keep the omega slime at bay like this, what should I do next?

While thinking, I was reminded of the large trench I saw to the north when I went through Babylon's outer wall.

If I wanted to reach the king's army, it would be faster if I jumped over it. Even the omega slime which I could sense swimming underground was heading toward that area either.

It would be a good chance to strike at its exposed body... and then...

Breaking me from my thought, Greed called me via **[mind reading]**.

[What's the matter?]

“No, it’s nothing”

It’s only an example, but regardless, I’ll still have to go on.

Greed laughed at me while I was still deep in thought.

[Fate... your heart beat rate is rising.]

“It’s because I’ve been running all the time. Even I can get out of breath.”

[Fuh, then I guess you’re fine.]

It’s the high and mighty black sword as usual. At the very least, I got distracted for a moment thanks to that exchanges.

Before long, the huge trench came into sight. While keeping my eyes on the omega slime swimming underground, I quickened my pace and dove.

In midair, I drew the black sword, and shifted it into bow form.

“Greed! 20% of my stats!”

At my approval, Greed began to absorb more of my stats. In exchange for the feeling of lack of power coursing through my body, the bow morphed into something even more sinister than before. I held up the even more terrible-looking bow and took aim.

In addition to that, just to ensure things.

I activated the mutation technique [Spiraling Charged Shot]. This would be my first attempt to combine this new technique and Greed’s secret form, but I’m pretty sure he’ll be able to manage it. He’s supposedly high and mighty after all, so let’s give his capability to a test.

Greed rarely did this, but he actually got flustered thanks to the addition I made, which I frankly don’t really care that much.

With the penetrative power of the mutated technique, I should be able to hit the core even if the omega slime split its body again to shield itself.

And that’s why, I have to be able to see the omega slime properly before shooting. It’s to end it once and for all.

With my eye that could see magic power flow, the omega slime was finally about to break through the trench’s wall.

I waited for it to appear and for the right timing to shoot.

Now! !

It appeared by melting the rocks along the trench’s wall. The omega slime under its whale form.

I took aim toward the core, then released the magic arrow that had been accumulating power to its limit.

Due to me having no footing while in midair, and the usual extreme recoil of the bow shooting, I was blown away as expected.

But the aim is accurate. If it’s going as it is... However.

“Kuh, at this timing?”

Someone shot down the omega slime. Something that looked like black lines coming from over my head and went straight to the omega slime below.

There were three of it. And it had such a tremendous speed.

Even with my improved dynamic visual acuity from being in semi-starving state, I was barely able to follow its movement.

I could only see black line passing by.

The next one was slightly red hued, different from the first one. It impacted right over the arrow I had shot.

Normally, my attack would have enough power to open a huge hole on earth alongside the omega slime, but what happened before me was unbelievable.

The omega slime continued to move despite having lost its core to my attack. To think such a thing is possible...

[Gluttony skill activated]

[Durability+13360000, Strength+8760000, Magic+11983000, Spirit+11248000, Agility+5347000 will be applied to your stats]

[Corrosion Magic is added to your skill]

The inorganic voice told me that I've successfully eaten the omega slime soul. But why is it still moving?

Losing its shape, the omega slime started to irregularly tremble.

I just gained over 10 million stats—having eaten a good quality soul after a long time, the gluttony skill acted up, making my head went numb.

By eating the omega slime, semi-starvation state was also cancelled. This was why I hesitated a bit a little while ago.

Oh well, it's not like I could take it easy just yet.

[Fate! Get away! It's dangerous]

“I know already”

Right after Greed's warning, I landed on the edge of the trench.

I immediately jumped in adhering to his warning.

[Finally it appeared. This feeling... it's a Mortal Sin weapon like me]

“Just as Eris said, is this guy a danger for us?”

[Yes, this will be the greatest danger we've faced so far.]

I landed back on the ground soon after. The guy with the mortal sin weapon hadn't attempted to attack me at all. An advantageous step since it kept them under the radar. But even if that's the case, they had a great opportunity to attack me while I was trying to strike at the omega slime.

Don't tell me they didn't dare to do it...?

[You'll understand once you return up]

“Right.”

The landscape had been greatly devastated as usual.

A guy in black was standing there. His whole body concealed. He's also wearing a skull mask similar to mine. Strangely enough, when I saw the mask, I had a hard time recognizing his feature.



“Is that the same effect as my mask? He’s imitating me...”

The man had in his hand a black sword. Thought its shape was quite different from **Greed**.

Apart from the blade, there is something like a tube built on it.

The man in black remained unmoved as he looked at me.

Greed answered the question that swirled inside my mind.

[That weapon the man has, is called **Envy**. It has bayonet-like shape. One can shoot out a projectile out of that tube. The projectile also has tracking function.]

“That’s... in other word.”

[Exactly. It’s the kind of weapon capable of handling both long distance and melee fight at the same time]

Are you kidding me? It’s capable of something like that?

I tried to use appraisal, but couldn’t see anything. I could sense that the guy was laughing behind that mask of his.

Perhaps he also knows how to nullify appraisal skill. One can disable the skill for a while by making magical burst inside their body as a countermove.

We continued to stare to each other for a while. Until the guy finally turned back first.

For some reason, after returning the bayonet to its sheath, he bowed and gave me a salute.

And then, the ground started to vibrate.

This was... no way.

I hoped that it’s not what I expected. However, what went out was actually something more.

The shattered core split into one, two, three new omega slime... and the number continued to increase. On the restored cores, there is a coat of arms that wasn’t there before.

Greed clicked his tongue.

[It seems that the projectile shot to the omega slime just now was capable of improving its abilities. Apparently, now it's able to split even the core to make a separate body without affecting its stats]

“Isn’t that, bad...?”

[Yes, it may continue to multiply infinitely with its new improved ability. But, this... has bad compatibility with Fate.]

That’s not the case. I still haven’t eaten enough.

Focusing my mind, I invoked the power of Gluttony once more.

Instead of saying a word of greetings to him, I drew black bow and shoot a magic arrow at the man in black who had decided to stay to sightsee.

Chapter 71

Area E

The arrow I released at the man in black was deflected by the black bullet he shot.

So is it useless...? Then I just need to not stop trying.

I'll just continue to rain attacks to glean more information about that weapon's capability.

"Chi, such a nuisance."

The omega slime kept multiplying. It may hit over 100 in numbers by the evening.

Rather than the omega slimes, I had to stop that man in black who was the root of this problem...

Though I understood that I couldn't ignore it either, especially if it multiplied to such an extent.

"Really a huge nuisance."

The omega slimes had even obstructed my line of sight to that man in black. The translucent gigantic blobs had actually surrounded me. Meanwhile, that guy hadn't even budged a single step from where he stood.

It's a quite frightening situation.

I don't think I can get out of this place while remaining unscathed.

But he's sorely mistaken if he thought that this will stop me. I'm only just begun here.

How cute you are, aren't you? Just as I expected, the omega slimes suddenly surged towards me all at once. There was no room to escape... or was there...?

The acidic liquid laced with corrosive magic that could melt me without leaving any trace, sprayed from all directions.

Greed shouted to me, seemingly a little restless.

[Fate! Where is your countermeasure, Fate!]

My sight turned blurry. But I marched on.

I continued walking toward the man in black through every omega slimes.

“Fu—, it’s a bit bothersome to not be able to breath.”

[You... have already used it]

“It’s thanks to Gluttony skill”

The ground I had stepped on was blackened, rotting due to decay. And any omega slime which struck me collapsed in the same way.

—corrosion magic.

I used this magic I got earlier and overpowered the omega slime’s own corrosion magic and acidic body liquid by using more magic power than they could.

“These omega slimes are no longer a threat to me anymore.”

The inorganic voice began to resound in my head, telling me that I had killed something. Here was where the problem began.

[Gluttony Skill Activated]

[Durability+133600000, Strength+87600000, Magic+119830000, Spirit+112480000, Agility+53470000 will be applied to your stats]

I had my stats increased by over 100 million, and in addition to that, I had eaten 10 crown tier monsters at the same time.

I felt the repercussion ten times greater than when I ate only one omega slime.

Hahahahah... this is bad... the time when I went berserk after I killed Assault Kobold back on Heart’s Territory crossed in my mind.

No, it’s even worse than back then.

The vision on my right eye had turned red.

The gluttony skill was running rampant. I clenched my jaw while staring at the blood

falling on the ground.

“Not nearly enough, there is still more to eat”

[Cut it out, it's impossible]

“Don't say that. I have to at least hear his voice.”

Even so, the man in black still hadn't budge. I thought his attitude would change after seeing how easily I took care of the omega slime, so is it still within his margin of expectation?

Greed warned me once again.

[That guy, I think he's waiting for you to become unable to eat anymore. It's the omega slime after all.]

“Before that happens, my stats will skyrocket.”

[No, that will depend on what will you do next]

“Greed?”

I tried to listen to Greed, but was distracted by another attack from the omega slime. Dammit. I kept eating even as I sensed that my compatibility with Greed had become less than what it used to be.

Everytime the inorganic voice sounded in my head, I sensed that the feeling grew stronger along with the pain caused by the delighted Gluttony skill that came like a crashing wave.

However, I finally realized something after a while. I only felt pain running through my body every time I ate an omega slime.

Why? I kept hearing the inorganic voice announcing that the stats have been added, but I couldn't feel anything.

This shouldn't be the case. I tried to draw the black bow to shot at the man in black once more. It was supposedly a magic arrow with power much greater than any I've ever shot before.

But the man in black didn't even intercept it, he simply took the blow.

"This is..."

He didn't even receive any damage, only his mask was displaced a little. Shrugging off the magic arrow as if it's something insignificant, as if telling me I don't even need to intercept it in the first place.

Greed urged me to check myself with Appraisal. Certainly I haven't seen how much I've grown after eating that many.

Fate Graphite Lv1

Durability : 999999999

Strength : 999999999

Magic : 999999999

Spirit : 999999999

Agility: 999999999

Skills: **Gluttony, Appraisal, Mind Reading, Concealment, Night Vision, Martial Arts, Snipe, Herculean Strength, Holy Sword Mastery, One-handed Sword Mastery, Two-handed Sword Mastery, Spear Mastery, Bow Mastery, Fire Magic, Dust Magic, Illusion Magic, Corrosion Magic, Durability Strengthening (S), Durability Strengthening (M), Strength Strengthening (S), Strength Strengthening (M), Strength Strengthening (L), Magic Strengthening (S), Magic Strengthening (M), Spirit Strengthening (S), Spirit Strengthening (M), Spirit Strengthening (L), Agility Strengthening (S), Agility Strengthening (M), Auto Recovery, Fire Resistance.**

It's capped at nine hundred million. Does that mean there is a limit no matter how much I ate?

Answering my doubt, Greed said.

[That is the limit of a human. From here onward is the domain beyond that of a human. It is known as the Area E]

"Area E... that's"

Myne had also mentioned this. That Tenryu belongs to Area E, and how it'll take at least 10 years for me to reach it.

And then, what else did she tell me...?

I'm missing something that will allow me to break my limit. Perhaps that's also why I couldn't do anything on Tenryu's presence.

[Fate, here is the bottomline. There is a huge difference between those who has reached Area E compared to those who hasn't.]

"That is..."

[Any attack you do toward a person of Area E will do no damage. Physical, magical, special states, any kind of attacks will not affect them.]

"Then, the reason why the magic arrow earlier didn't do anything to him..."

I switched to black sword form and continued to attack the omega slime while listening to Greed.

[There is no mistaking, he belongs to Area E]

The man in black seemingly grinned under his mask. The eyes behind that mask eye holes were dyed in red.

It's the color I know well enough to be wary about.

Condescending... brilliant blood-like crimson. It's as if my heart has been clawed by an eagle just by looking at those eyes.

[Fate, let me tell you this. No matter how sharp the weapon is, it all still goes back to its wielder. That's why I said earlier that it'll be depending on what you do]

I grasped the black sword tighter. I couldn't wait ten years like Myne said.

I will rush up to Area E right here, right now.

Chapter 72

Two Preparations

Let's go! I'll utilize my current stats to the fullest, and put a stop to that man in black once and for all.

A lot of omega slimes got on my path along the way. But my sight was only fixed to that man in black alone.

I had to defeat that man in order to stop the multiplication of the omega slimes anyways.

Simply cutting down the omega slimes that got in my way, I proceeded forward. Even though there was no change to my stats, the inorganic voice continued to resound every time I killed something.

Even though I slowly approached him, he doesn't seem to have any intention of attacking me... Then, what if I did this?

I swung down the black sword with the full momentum my body could provide.

The surrounding air vibrated immensely.

The man in black took my attack without even flinching. No damage whatsoever.

The man let out a short laugh from under his mask.

“Can’t you understand it yet? The difference in our power...? Your efforts are useless.”

“It’s not a complete waste. I got to make you talk.”

What I just said seemed to annoy him, as he clicked his tongue and shoved the black sword away.

It was a force beyond my expectation.

100 metres, no... I was pushed backward for about 200 metres.

I had even stabbed Greed into the ground to slow myself down. Still, the momentum didn't diminish... That's how powerful the push was.

Looking at me with hatred, the man in black aimed his black bayonet towards me.

Chi. As soon as I changed the black sword to shield form, a sound of shooting echoed. The recoil was very strong despite being blocked. And it reverberated through my arm over and over again.

After one, two, three more shots, I couldn't hold it anymore... I was pushed backward even further. To the point that I was planted deep inside the rocks that previously stood behind me.

The rock partially crumbled around me once I stopped moving.

Gravity caught me and my body fell off to the ground, I spat out the blood that rose up from within my stomach.

It didn't seem that the opponent would let me wipe out the blood. He's already right there in front of me. What a speed.

Everything about him, is on a different realm... The differences were too much.

At the very least, it's still worth to try. Even if I have to put more curses onto myself—even if I have to pay an even more expensive price...

I'll put in everything I got. Just so that I can cross that 10 years gap right now.

The man in black raised his bayonet as he looked down on me. A very strong energy seeming poured in to his arm.

Then, that extremely dangerous power was swung towards my head.

High pitched sound of metal clashing echoed. On the aftermath, the huge rocks behind me cracked even more, and inevitably shattered completely

The debris fell over me like rain, but right now... I could be careless about that.

Because, I also.....

The man in black quickly noticed that something strange had happened. He moved his sight to find that his bayonet had simply connected with the black sword.

“Those eyes... Could it be... To this stage.”

“I’ve completely released the full power of my Mortal Sin skill. Just like you.”

The power I’ve never felt before gradually coursed throughout my body. It’s to the point that I could pushed the bayonet back slowly but surely.

This is... Area E. The world looks different now. Even the scent of air, the feeling on my body, and the speed of information going through my head felt different. Super sense... this is most definitely it.

The voice of the main in black sounded different in my ear after this transformation.

“You shouldn’t have reached this stage yet...”

“Well, if it won’t come on its own, then I just need to make it come to me.”

In any case, the Gluttony skill won’t listen to me even at partially released state. So now that it’s fully released, I’ve prepared myself for it.

Prepared to kill my enemy. And, prepared to die myself. With those two preparations set firmly in my mind, I sought to completely control the Gluttony skill temporarily just this once.

“I should be thanking you. If you weren’t here, I’ll never resolve myself to do this.”

“Kuh”

By reaching area E, the stats that has previously reached the cap tremendously soar. In this case, it’s my strength.

“Let’s go! The preparations are set!”

Taking a step forward, the ground caved in under my feet.

To the best of my ability, I pushed the man in black’s bayonet back.

He unexpectedly jumped backward, and the omega slimes quickly filled the gap he made. He’s making them his shield.

But to the current me, it's useless attempt.

"Don't get in the way!"

Just by staring at the omega slimes, they stopped their movements immediately and stood there unmoving. This is the power of the Gluttony skill that will allow me to eat any weaker opponents easily.

I ran through the small path provided by the still unmoving omega slimes. The man in black aimed his weapon at me for a long range attack at the end of the path.

The released projectile, I could see it now.

I slashed it with my black sword, cutting the projectile apart, then prepared for more. The man in black also held his bayonet back in response. Waiting for the right timing to act while I continued to approach.

The black sword and the black bayonet clashed once more... the resulting clash of power left a wide round crater on the ground.

There was no need to do it over and over again. The dust rose up around the man in black, taking away his sight.

I will crack that skull mask. He's a very formidable enemy. Attacking his head would be my best option.

I turned the tip of my black sword, and made a sudden thrust. Stabbing at the man's face through the rising dust.

However, the black bayonet intercepted in time and slightly diverted my sword's path.

I managed to pierce the left part and his mask and wound his cheek. Using that momentum, I rushed forward, creating a distance between us.

When he looked back to me, his mask gave in, crumbling as its durability had gone down to zero. Without the recognition inhibition provided by mask, I could finally see the familiar face behind it.

In fact, I just met this man earlier today.

I simply couldn't forget. That smooth blond hair, and his deceitful smile.

“So it’s you... Norden Alistair.”

It’s not really surprising. I always had a bad impression about this particular guy. And it’s also strange that he seemed to be familiar with Greed. He was lying when he told me that he read about Greed once on old document.

Norden put down his hood, and laughed nicely.

“You are both correct, and incorrect.”

“Then will you tell me the truth?”

“I can only tell you this, I’m not as sweet as Eris, so I can do something like this.”

He aimed his bayonet at me again, whilst taking out a whistle from under his shirt. After laughing once more, he opened his mouth and blew the whistle.

The sound wasn’t so loud, but high pitched.

“What on earth did you just do?”

“You’ll understand in a few. It’ll be flying in the sky. Any time now.”

Flying? In the sky?..... no way.

From the southern horizon, a white object came flying. I can already tell what it was just from the way the gluttony skill is reacting to it.

“Tenryu...”

“That’s right, the living disaster. Depending on the person, they even call it a angel or a god.”

Norden aimed his bayonet to the sky.

“So, let’s get started. Me and Tenryu will attempt to kill that girl. Show me how you’ll stop us.”

“You...”

Dammit, I didn't even have the chance to talk back to Norden. Tenryu's target was not me, and even now it's flying toward the army led by Roxy.

Chapter 73

Dragon Roaring to the Sky

No matter how I think about it, I had no time to deal with Norden right now. Seeing through my thoughts, he laughed a little.

“In 30 seconds. Can you... make it?”

“You asshole!”

The now visible Tenryu opened its huge maw, setting off to the location where the army led by Roxy was.

I couldn't afford to delay anymore. So I rushed to the west as fast as I could.

Norden wouldn't overlook this chance of course. And sure enough, he begun shooting countless projectiles from behind me.

Whilst continuously heading toward my destination, I turned around and slashed apart the projectiles that were targeting me... I became unable to check on the Tenryu thanks to that hindrance, I was about to change the black sword to bow form.

However that's exactly what Norden wanted. Anyhow I need to go to the west.

Immediately, I could sense unpleasant magical energy coming from my back.

This was too much!

Blue translucent bodies—the omega slimes had made a barricade with their own body. A strange laughter could be heard. I guess for Norden, this is nothing but a game. That bastard...

[Fate! More attacks incoming!]

Norden's ranged attack came in periodically even as I forced my way through the wall of omega slimes. Thanks to Greed paying attention to it, I was able to ward it off.

Several few moments later, I managed to reach the battlefield where the King's army was fighting off the death march. I could see the soldiers were battling not only orcs, but also gargoyles, and other monsters I've never seen before.

But the morale couldn't be said as high. With the Tenryu coming from the south it'll be inevitable for fear to sprout no matter how committed their hearts were.

Even so, they refused to retreat... did they fight on because their leader told them to? Or was it because they were suppressed by the awareness that the end is near?

I don't know.

Tenryu's roar shifted my focus back to it. Its huge body casted a shadow over a wide area, enough to make anyone to mistakenly think that it's night already. Thanks to me having drawn out the gluttony skill completely, I was quite fine despite being this close to it, unlike my first encounter.

I could move my body just fine. Perhaps because I've already achieved Area E as well.

This should be enough to stop Tenryu. Meanwhile, the Tenryu had finished charging something in its mouth and is about to release it.

A huge energy wave bursted out of Tenryu's mouth, scorching Gallia's terrain like it's nothing, gradually making its way to where the King's army and the death march were.

The monsters on the southern area got evaporated instantly. Orcs, gargoyles... even the crown tier stood no chance against the attack, they were easily slaughtered.

That majestic roar, one that could easily be mistook as an Angel or God. Some might even consider to worship it.

But I'm here to stop it.

"Greed!"

The third additional form that I obtained after defeating the machine angel—the black shield.

The black sword changed shape and collide with the roar. Unbelievable, heavy pressure coursed through the shield to my arms, and even I could feel it reaching my feet.

「グリードつ！」

機天使を喰らったことで得ることができた
第三位階——黒盾を今こそ。

形状を変えて、迫り来る咆哮と衝突する。

信じられないほど、重圧が黒盾を持つ両腕から伝って、
両足までにのしかかる。

ほんの少しだけ後ろへ押されてしまふが、
なんとか持ちこたえられそうだ。

黒盾に衝突した咆哮は、
虹色の光になって、段々と拡散されている。



I was pushed back little by little, but I should be able to hold on at this rate. The roar that collided with the black shield diffused into rainbow colored lights, gradually weakening.

The soldiers who were standing behind me didn't understand what had happened at first, but they slowly realized the situation. My arrival had spared them from their imminent end.

Anyways, would you please go away already?

A painful feeling struck me, just when I was sighing in relief. One of Norden's projectile had hit my right thigh.

"Dammit, that asshole"

I was forced to remain standing still in order to fend off Tenryu's attack. But instead of aiming for my head or torso, being a 'good' guy he is, Norden aimed at my thigh.

Losing the stiffness of my stance, the power to hold on also collapsed. I was pushed back quite easily. It felt like as if there was an empty spot on where my right leg is supposed to be. It simply won't respond to my will as more and more blood overflowed from the open wound.

[Auto Recovery] had activated immediately in response to this, but there was simply not enough time.

In addition to that, I wouldn't be able to respond properly to the next attack as it is. I saw someone coming at me.

The soldiers who were standing behind me earlier. Each one raised their shield in the attempt to protect my right flank from the incoming projectile.

I felt thankful, but unfortunately... that's too reckless. The other party is an area E. He's dimensions away from you guys.

"Get away from those attacks!"

The soldiers surrounding me wouldn't listen. The fact that they acted on their own initiative without any order both made me happy and saddened at the same time.

Because Norden isn't the soft kind of guy. Rather, he's enjoying this kind of situation. The bullet hit the shield bearing soldier on the left corner. He immediately exploded into mush, his blood splattering on my mask.

Even so, the remaining soldiers stood their ground.

And so, they fell one by one. Creating a pool of blood under my feet.

Quickly, quickly, please quickly stop already. And then, Tenryu's attack begun to died down.

However, it's already on its way to unleash the second attack. And this time it'll seem to be on a much larger output than before.

This is bad.

While thinking like that, I could hear the voice of a girl I knew so well.

"What is this..."

I suppose I may have gotten pushed quite far back by Tenryu's attack. I'm pretty sure she had rushed in here to see what had actually happened and how to handle it.

Roxy was that kind of girl after all.

However, this was probably the worst timing.

But I digress. Tenryu's second wave of attack had been unleashed. It was an attack so powerful, both of my sleeves got torn off, and my mask cracked and gradually disappear.

No good! Norden's muzzle must've been pointed at Roxy by now.

"That's just, no goooooooood"

[This is..... Fate, you...]

The moment Greed let out a surprised voice, the black shield started to change shape. This is, a combination with both black bow and black scythe. At the same time, even without Greed telling me how to use this new form, I already knew how.

“Goooooooooo!”



Black shield that absorbed my stats released blue waves that covered the surroundings.

At that instance, Tenryu's mouth exploded. It was roaring restlessly. What I could hear afterward was only its cry. Norden's attack had also been blocked.

Greed said while smiling wryly via **[mind reading]**.

[No way... You actually unleashed the secret form without having to rely on me. Fuhahahaha, that's just too awesome. Very much so...]

"Shut up... I'm not done yet"

With the Tenryu still struggled after taking damage, the soldiers started to evacuate immediately.

However... now that I've lost my mask, I couldn't turn my face. Because there was no recognition inhibition, Roxy will immediately recognize me.

But before I could do anything, not that I can move anyway, Roxy asked in a loud voice.

".....Fate. Is that you, Fate?"

That voice, it felt like my heart was grasped by those words.

Haa, the time has come for me to come clean. And along with that, comes the end of this masquerade.

I let out a huge sigh. Then turn around.

There was the girl with her unchanging straight eyes.

Chapter 74

Decisive Moment

However, even though Roxy called my name, I didn't respond.

No, I'd be better off not saying anything...

Now, since I'm under the starving effect of gluttony skill, when I looked at her with my current red eyes, Roxy ended up unable to move due to her lower stats being lower than mine. That kind of power alone was a proof of my abnormality.

She tried to say something through her gaze, but time would not wait. Tenryu could throw another roar at any time, I couldn't spare my thought trying to understand what Roxy was trying to say.

I'd deceived her up until now... I swear I would tell her everything later. But I had to convey the one thing I need her to do first.

"Please leave with the army immediately. Tenryu will start moving again anytime soon. I will buy you some time."

And brief, final words,

"...I've always lied to you... I'm sorry, Roxy-sama. Thank you, for everything up until now."

In the end I merely said what I want to say. It made me feel so cowardly it hurt my chest.

Then, when I was about redirect my attention back to the Tenryu, I saw Roxy's big eyes shed tears. I didn't know the meaning behind those tears, not that I had time to think about it at the moment.

Roxy couldn't say anything back due to the restraining property of my red eyes. But I almost could hear her calling out my name in a low voice as she took her leave.

As I ran myself on a stretch, I saw Tenryu recovering from the scratch it suffered, and

Norden standing over its head. Looking down on earth from the sky like a heavenly being.

Anyways, Tenryu had so much lifeforce. To think it could recover from such wound in just a moment...

I have to attack it before it completely recovered. So I changed the black sword into black bow, while also thinking how to get rid of that troublesome Norden.

I continuously sprayed magic arrows at Norden from all sides. He intercepted some with the black projectiles, but had to slash the rest with the bayonet.

What's with that... I wondered? Why did he do that when he could've use the black projectile to intercept all the arrows I shot?

Greed told me through **[mind reading]** in response to my uncomfortable feeling.

[It seems there is a limit on how many times he can shoot in a row. Thinking back, he did attack in intervals.]

“It seems so. But, Greed! Why don’t you even know about it? Aren’t you also a Mortal Sin weapon?”

[Envy is a second generation weapon. There are many things I don’t know about it. It’s not like I’d seen its design draft.]

“What’s with that? Greed... how unreliable you are”

[Shut up! Besidely that guy is a secretive bitch with a twisted personality. This me is so much better.]

...so it’s pretty much the same as Greed, a real handful to take care of... Although I couldn’t say that right now. We are still in the midst of battle. I’ll be in trouble if the bastard sulk.

Then, let’s just do this.

“I’m glad that what I got was Greed!”

[Right!? Of course! Hahahahaha]

Easy peasy. As I grasped the easy to please weapon of mine, I confirmed the King's army condition. It appeared that they've started to retreat. So they believed in me. That's good... then, I can go toe to toe here.

[Fate, try using 'that'! The current you should be able to use it. Leave the control to me.]

"Yeah, let's go!"

I was right under the Tenryu now. This was the ideal range.

I quickly switched back to black sword. Then, I activated the mutated Holy Sword Mastery technique—— **[Grand Cross Returnable]**.

Gooooo. I brandished the black sword that was brimming with magical power. The heretic sword actually started to emit sacred light, signaling that the skill was a success.

I turned my wrist, as if opening a key.

Four gigantic cross of lights appeared above Tenryu's head. It descended in a moment and surrounded it. Then they began to shine as they circulated around Tenryu.

Tenryu screamed harder, it tried to claw its way to escape but couldn't. The reason being, it was the effect of the mutated technique **Grand Cross Returnable**—an infinite prison.

I couldn't use it except at a very close range, and the success rate was low. However, once invoked properly, it won't miss its target. The success rate was greatly increased since I'm still in my starving state.

Whilst inflicting continuous damage to Tenryu, I aimed to slowly weaken it.

...but, wasn't this too easy?

Bullets came down from above. Since I was expecting it, I managed to cut all of them with my sword.

Following that, the black bayonet swung down to break my brain.

Blocking it, we glared to each other.

“You actually did it. You used the secret of Greed’s third form, causing my cute slimes to no longer multiply and are dying. And you even used a technique I’ve never seen before. The defender of the kingdom Tenryu looks pitiful, isn’t it? How will you solve this?”

“You... doing all those things to the King’s army... And what do you mean by Tenryu looks pitiful?”

“Even that thing is replaceable. That Holy Knight is also the same. No, I think she still has some uses? Well, what will be achieved if I don’t kill her, I have no idea. If it doesn’t work then I could just move on to the next one”

Norden exerted more power. Kuh... the sword felt heavy.

Apparently the loss of stats from having used the secret of Greed’s third form was the biggest factor. I should’ve had higher strength than Norden, but now he’s pushing me back. The cause wasn’t only that.

Norden let out a faint laugh, cause he could see it too.

“Firstly, you can’t maintain your Area E for too long. Aren’t you approaching your limit right now? Secondly, you used too much of your energy to maintain that technique. Thirdly, I haven’t gone serious yet.”

The power struggle quickly collapsed. Such an amazing strength. Unable to resist it, I was forced to the ground by Norden’s bayonet.

From the broken earth, countless rock shards flew up due to the impact. Taking that chance, I slashed at Norden’s neck.

“Whoops, that’s dangerous.”

Norden did a backstep. Meanwhile Greed called to my attention.

[Close the distance. Don’t let him off]

“I know already”

It goes without saying. Lowering my posture to the ground, aiming for the nape of his

neck, I dashed in with the black sword.

Even so, Norden managed to dodge by tilting his head.

“How strange. Your fighting style changed. Why is that?”

He moved along the black sword without hurting himself, approaching me then said...

“Oh I see. That’s why.”

Norden glanced at Tenryu, then smiled like a kid.

“I wonder. The answer, is it because you can’t maintain the technique if you go to a certain distant from the target?”

Right, that’s correct. I must keep my distance close. In addition to that, I must stay on sword form in order to maintain the technique. If he managed to get away, I won’t be able to do anything, since I can’t switch to black bow.

Norden who could tell from my expression had a triumphant look on his face.

“I guess we already know what I’ll have to do...”

“...not yet”

I frantically tried to close in the distance with Norden, slashing in.

However, Norden seemed to have been waiting for this impatience of mine.

The sweeping slash of his bayonet cut my left arm off. It didn’t hurt at first, but it gradually grew into a mind numbing pain. I knelt down due to the excessive pain.

As I looked up from my kneeling position, Norden was looking up to the sky as though the victorious and defeated had been decided.

“What a shame. Eris had some expectation about you, and you did managed to obstruct me this much. I’ll give you that.”

As he said so, he pierced the black bayonet to my chest while I was trying to get up. It seemed painful. Much more so than my left arm.

But the one who cried in pain, was Norden.

He was stabbed with a black sword from behind his back...

“What... Is this...”

The black sword ran through his body and emerged from his chest. From behind, but he didn't really know who did it.

Norden tried to turn his head while pressing the bleeding wound, but the black sword dug even further into his body.

“You were careless at the end”

That said, I turned my eyes to the illusion that Norden had stabbed in the heart with the black bayonet...

That's enough. The image scattered as I canceled the illusion magic. The illusion magic normally wouldn't work on Norden.

But when he's already convinced that it's his win, I saw a chance. It was a gambling on my part, since I only had this one card left.

I had to sacrifice my left hand in order to make the gamble went through.

“You deliberately let your arm get slashed...”

“Yeah, that's right. I won't be able to defeat you if I didn't do that much. I gave you my left arm. Now take it and go away.”

I moved the black sword sideways, cutting through Norden's body.

Chapter 75

Being Honest

As I watched Norden falling down as a corpse, the inorganic voice started to sound.

[Gluttony Skill Activated]

**[Durability+2.0E(+8), Strength+1.8E(+8), Magic+2.1E(+8), Spirit+2.4E(+8),
Agility+1.4E(+8) will be applied to your stats]**

So this was Area E stats looked like. Ehhh!? There was no addition to the skill... Under the onslaught of gluttony skill on my mind, I couldn't help but to feel that there was something wrong with this Norden Alistair.

I didn't know why, but I saw a white space.

I wonder why, but I felt like I've been here before. I tried to remember, but it stuck at the corner of my head unable to surface.

Looking around the pure white world, while trying to remember, a little girl suddenly appeared.

The girl was also white. It won't be an exaggeration to say that she's a part of this pure white world.

The girl looked at me, and sighed.

"There, I told you to not overdo it... there is a limit with me alone."

She said so, pointing the white ground under my feet. There was darkness under the thin membrane. Voices of people carrying grudges could be heard.

I instinctively understood, the world below was like hell. I saw it once before, I remembered now. This was the space I once saw in my dream.

I also knew the girl standing before me. This person was,

"You are... The little girl inside the machine angel that I defeated."

“En, that’s right. I’m glad you remember. This is the first time, I can talk to you properly.”

She showed a smile for the first time on her previously expressionless face, then told me her name.

“I’m Luna. That’s right! I need to thank you.”

“For what?”

Luna tilted her head while making a disgusted face, then said in a serious manner.

“Thank you, for killing me.”

What should I do, I was at a loss for word. Having killed her left both good and bad things for me, and one of them was that I felt a sense of guilt for killing her...

When she thanked me, to be honest, I really had no idea if I should be happy about it.

“Don’t make such a face... if I say it’s good, then it’s good.”

“...even so I... can’t say that it’s all good.”

“What a stubborn guy. Well, I knew that much about you since I’ve been watching from here.”

What’s with that... I felt like my privacy had been invaded without me knowing.

Luna kept talking, ignoring how I really feel. This one-sided way of talking reminded me of Myne. Even their face looked similar.

“Wait a second, are you listening?”

“Yeah, so what is this place?”

Luna, seemingly alright with me not listening, answered me either way.

“This is the spiritual space where the souls of those eaten by the gluttony gathered. And this white space is the product of my power.”

“Hmmm”

“That face!? You don’t really get it, do you?! Fine, thanks to me creating this white space, you are less likely to be affected by the gluttony skill. Now is that the right attitude for everything I’ve done for you?!”

Could it be... in retrospect, the gluttony skill did calm down for a long time after eating Machine Angel Haniel.

Although I also did some training to withstand gluttony skill, I always thought that it was strange. So this is the reason why.

No way, she’s been protecting me all this time.....

“Why did you do it?”

“I told you already. As a thank for killing me. That was the reward..... however, I’m reaching my limit. I can’t become your pillar anymore.”

With her red eyes, Luna sadly looked around the white space.

Without me noticing, while talking to her, the white space was shrinking.

“You should not eat the Tenryu. If you do, then I can’t help you with my power. You’ll cease to become yourself... for sure.”

But I couldn’t stop just yet. When I’m about to ask how to get out of this place, the floor below me disappeared, and I fell down to the emptiness.

“Uaaaaaaaaaa”

It was a red haired stranger who got ahold of me when I’m about to fall into the darkness. He seemed older than me, and was quite tall.

He pulled me up by the hand, while seemingly under a very bad mood.

“Good grief... when you didn’t answer, I never thought that you’d be in this space. This me is at my limit. The prison around the Tenryu will dissolve soon.”

“That voice... could you be Greed!?”

"Ah, that's right. This former body is only temporary. If you want to say thank then say it to that girl over there. She's the one who called me here."



The seemingly annoyed Greed pointed towards Luna. I wonder if they knew to each other, and it's weird to actually see his face.

But perhaps it's because I always saw Greed as a weapon, so seeing his face right now was something new.

"Oi, don't stare at me like that."

"...could it be, this was how you looked in past?"

"Chi. I don't really care about that kind of thing anymore. Come, it's time."

That's, right. Greed should know how to return.

"Greed, lend me your strength"

"Naturally. That's there reason this me came here in the first place."

I then said to Luna.

"I'll still have to beat Tenryu. I can't just let the masterless Tenryu be as it is."

Luna didn't say anything else. She merely nodded.

Greed offered his hand to me, which I shook. We were wrapped in a glowing light, and before I knew it, I'm back at where I was—Gallia. I grasped the black sword firmly in my right hand.

"So we're back..."

[Right. This took me some time and effort.]

"Sorry."

The Tenryu was still restrained by the crosses of light in the sky. However, the prison was weakening and seemed to be about to dissolve. If it deteriorated further, it would only be a matter of time before it's broken through.

My eyes suddenly caught Norden's corpse on the ground. Eating that guy didn't give benefit other than stats. Being a mortal sin holder, he should've held some high level

skills.

Greed answered to my doubt via **[Mind Reading]**.

[That's just a puppet. Apparently, Envy is actually the one in control. I wonder where that thing got such an ability? Controlling other people... Well, maybe from that person, of course]

"Then I can't just leave it alone."

I raised the black sword, planning to destroy the black bayonet, but Greed stopped me before I could.

[It's no use, don't waste your energy. A Mortal Sin weapon is indestructible. Even another Mortal Sin weapon couldn't destroy it.]

"But, if we leave it be like this"

I hit it with my black sword, sending it flying across Gallia. If it flew away over there, the puppetmaster should have a hard time finding it again.

"There it goes, flying away."

[Hahaha, I'm dying to know what Envy is thinking as it fly like that. Well done!]

In the sky, the restraints over Tenryu were finally broken. The Tenryu was released. Losing its master, the injured Tenryu was furious, and it tried to get away. I knew it, if I let it be, it may go to the fortress city Babylon and wreak havoc.

"Let's do it, Greed."

Let's go on a rampage for the last time. Raise everything to the highest notches, and bring down that monumental being from the sky.

I feel like it'll be great if I can do that.

Chapter 76

Devour

Tenryu greatly inflated its throat, preparing for a roar. Judging from the direction, it's aimed at the fortress city Babylon. Apparently, it's still trying to fulfill the order even if its master was gone...

I couldn't let that happen.

"Greed, have you ever tried walking in the air before?"

[!? What do you mean?]

I didn't give him a reply, and instead threw the black sword to Tenryu's chin as hard as I could.

The moment he left my hand, Greed seemed to be shouting something, but it shouldn't be anything important.

Originally, I didn't want to do that, but I can't use the black bow now with my left hand gone. Even if I had an auto recovery skill, it didn't seem like it's going to grow back. The bleeding had stopped though. It's a weird feeling since I still had my left arm just a few minutes ago, but now there was nothing there.

The black sword flew away drawing a line in the air, forcibly closing Tenryu's mouth who was about to let out another roar.

In that instance, an explosion occurred.

It seemed that the discharged energy crossed the critical point, and exploded inside its mouth.

Thank to that explosion, Tenryu limped away, gradually lowering its altitude.

Yosh, I should be able to reach it now.

Rather than jumping, it's more like I kicked the ground so much that I left a crater on it. I approached Tenryu which was still in midair that way, aiming for the sword that is still stuck on its chin.

I build up power to my remaining right hand, activating martial arts technique—
[One-inch Punch].

Tenryu's scales may be tough, but there shouldn't be any problem since the technique targeted what lied beneath those scales. Starting from where I punched, the energy ran through and created a gorey and bloody explosion on the other side.

I took the chance to climb over Tenryu that had lost most of its lower jaw. My eyes looked around, and found that the black sword was still stuck on the remnant of the jaw that was now piece of bloody chunk of meat. Using the piece as a foothold, I got closer and retrieved the sword.

“Welcome back, Greed. How was the air walk?”

[Fate... I'll remember this. Treating this me like a disposable throwing weapon...]

“I did retrieve you back properly.”

[That's not the problem!]

That's right, such a thing was unimportant at the moment. Tenryu stretched its extraordinary large arm to reach us. I took my time and activated **[Appraisal]** while moving to dodge.

〔One who Rules the Sky〕

Tenryu Lv 1500

Durability: 2.1E(+8)

Strength: 1.8E(+8)

Magic: 2.1E(+8)

Spirit: 2.9E(+8)

Agility: 1.5E(+8)

Skills: Durability Strengthening (XL), Magic Strengthening (XL), Spirit Strengthening (XL), Auto Recovery Boost

Naturally it's an Area E. This is the first time I saw a being with a 4 digit level.

Those stat strengthening skills were also (XL). I thought (L) was the highest tier, but

as it turned out there was actually a higher tier than that. Well, as one continued to level up, the skills will also grow stronger. But since I can't level myself up, although it surely strengthened my stats, these kind of skills are actually the less desirable ones.

Even so, I'm still looking forward to get those skills completely. This only made me wondering, is (XL) the highest tier, or was there an even higher tier? But for now... it doesn't matter.

Better than that, it had auto recovery boost... I see. So that's why it can still fly despite having taken this much damage. Apparently it's the next level of my own auto recovery skill.

I wanted to appraise the auto recovery boost further, but Tenryu didn't give me any more time to do so.

More arms were attacking me. I listened to Greed while dodging.

"Wh, why didn't Tenryu stop moving even if I look at it with my eyes?"

[Even if you have higher stats, it won't work since it belongs to Area E. I told you already, Area E is a world apart. Various things can happen]

"Too bad..."

So it's not going to work.

The arms landed behind me as I ran across Tenryu's back. Although Tenryu seemed to be enraged trying to get rid the little nuisance off its body, it didn't show any sign of falling down anytime soon.

In that case, I have to aim for the organ that let Tenryu fly in the sky—the six celestial wings.

One by one, I slashed them away with precision. Everytime it lost one wing, its altitude also dropped drastically.

"The one who will fall is you."

I jumped off Tenryu after it lost its last wing, and watched it crash into the ground. To be able to bring down a being that was considered to be either a god or an angel was a rather satisfying feeling.

Now that the gigantic creature lost its mobility, it looked almost harmless to me. Apparently, the auto recovery boost had a limit, seeing that the mangled jaw and the severed wings didn't grow back.

Although I managed to drop it to the ground, it'll be troublesome if I let it off. I grasped the black sword Greed firmly as I'm free falling.

Although having no lower jaw, Tenryu still attempted to release its powerful roar. As I thought the Tenryu was indeed a formidable adversary. It saw me dropping down in midair unable to dodge.

And of course Greed immediately warned me of this situation.

[Fate!]

“No problem”

Simultaneous with the release of energy wave, I activated **[Herculean Strength]** alongside one-handed sword mastery technique—**[Sharp Edge]**.

Herculean Strength can temporarily double my strength. However, it has a drawback of reducing my strength to 1/10 after the effect wears off, and it'll take a day to recover from it. But it's a perfect skill for this particular condition.

By doubling the stats of Area E, even a common technique like Sharp Edge showed a tremendous power that can even cut through Tenryu's attack.

The high density energy wave was split in two, and dispersed into particles of light. Tenryu was also not spared from that attack. The sword continued to slash down until it hit the earth and caused a huge chasm as it dug deep into the ground.

The severed corpse of Tenryu fell down into the chasm which the bottom cannot be seen. Fallen from the heavens and into the depth of the earth...

Now that Tenryu was gone, it'll be impossible to deter the monster of Gallia from coming. However, thanks to the chasm that split the two regions apart, it'll be hard for monsters incapable of flight to crossover towards the kingdom.

It's over. As I landed back on the ground, I could hear the inorganic voice.

[Gluttony skill Activated]

[Durability+2.1E(+8), Strength+1.8E(+8), Magic+2.1E(+8), Spirit+2.9E(+8), Agility+1.5E(+8) will be applied to your stats]

[Durability Strenghtening (XL), Magic Strenghtening (XL), Spirit Strengthening (XL), Auto Recovery Boost will be added to your skills]

Instantaneous pain suddenly struck the inside of my body. The reaction of Gluttony skill had indeed gone beyond the limit of what I can endure. It exceeded Luna's power which suppressed the gluttony skill.

If I tried to fight it off, it felt like the blood inside my body would spray out.

It'll be a matter of time. I just need to do it while I'm still myself.

I felt like I have to do it now. It's already the third time so far, and I think I got used to it to a certain extend. While my condition still allows me to.

“I’m sorry, Greed.”

[Fate! Wait! Stop it...]

“I... can’t hold on...”

I could understand why Greed sounded perturbed. The unlocking of the new form, I could do it one-sidedly if I want to.

Unlocking the next tier, I could feel my power was drained out rapidly.

At the same time, the black sword was enveloped by light as it changed form.

What appeared was an elegant staff.

I wanted to get a closer look on it, but I couldn't. I'm barely able to hold the staff properly due to the gluttony skill influence. As my grip loosened, I could hear Greed's voice through [Mind Reading].

So you too... It's rare for him to sound that lonely.

By unlocking the fourth form, my stats should be very low now, that the soldiers or the monsters of Gallia wouldn't have any difficulty in killing me. For a moment, I thought I saw something in the horizon. A certain someone who promised me that

she'll kill me if I were to go berserk.

It was a white haired, tan skinned girl coming from the south. With huge black axe in her hand... there was no mistake, Myne.

The time has come to fulfill her promise.

Chapter 77

The End of the Journey

While I was rendered unable to even stand as soon as the influence of the gluttony skill attacked me, Myne came closer.

Her eyes hadn't changed, still her repelling crimson colored eyes. However, unlike the usual her, there was a hint of loneliness in her gaze.

Myne swung her black axe up, aiming at the kneeling me. She then said.

"Even after I told you... not to touch Tenryu."

"Even so I don't have any other choice."

Myne had indeed told me about it. But the sole reason that I even went here was to protect Roxy from the Tenryu. Having done so, I could only feel satisfied.

My heart didn't fear death, and I felt surprisingly fresh.

If I die, I want to die as myself. Blood continued flowing out from my eyes, blurring my sight in crimson color. I felt like I could go insane at any time now.

Myne didn't make any move yet. But she replied after a while.

"Very well."

I looked at Myne with the last vestige of my strength. Her expression was decisive, hesitation no longer lingered there.

Such a dirty job. I asked her, even though she seemed unwilling, but she's the only one I could ask to.

I closed my eyes.

At that moment, memories of my life flashed in my mind. It started at the Kingdom, Roxy helping me escape the Burixes... how I talked about many things to the barkeep on the tavern I frequented.

Then, leaving the royal capital for Roxy, visiting my hometown, and meeting the Sword Saint Aaron. I promised Aaron to visit him again after I concluded my journey, but it seems that I can't fulfill it. It's shame that I can't see what the reconstructed Hausen looked like.

Then I arrived here in Gallia... in the fortress city Babylon, I got to meet the energetic Roxy again, I couldn't remember... anymore.

Apparently... it'll be over soon. My consciousness is waning.

"Myne, hurry!"

I could sense her feeling. This is it.

To be honest, I wish I can see Roxy's face... and hear her voice once more.

And then,

"Doooooooooon't!"

I heard an unexpected voice. Following that voice, I was rolling on the ground after someone seemingly shoved me. Probably the owner of that voice.

It was a voice I've already familiar with, so when I opened my eyes, there was Roxy as I thought. Both of us were covered in dust.

She hugged me, and said.

"What in the world... are you trying to do!"

"...Roxy-sama...!"

No way, I never thought that she'll return here in a rush. No, it was my mistake in the first place.

Roxy Heart isn't someone who would let me fight alone. She rushed back here on her own after evacuating the King's army. However, on my part, it's the worst timing.

This way she'll see the part of me that I don't want her to see. If only I could avoid this...

And just like that, Roxy told me.

"I... I can't dislike Fate for something like this. Fate is Fate! That's why, please don't do this."

Roxy's tears fell on my cheek. And at that point, I could feel the comfort that I had seemed to long forget.

I've always been scared. When I thought that she'll come to hate or afraid of what I've become due to the Gluttony skill, I couldn't help but to feel scared.

Even so, she looked into my repelling eyes, and despite the power it held, accepted it. Even now Roxy Heart hadn't changed at all, the one who made Fate Graphite to become willing to continue living..... she's that wonderful of a person.

Is this feeling of comfort because I was accepted as what I am? I have no idea why, but the gluttony skill begun to calm down on its own. It should've crossed the limit, becoming impossible to stop, and yet... why did it become awfully quiet?

"This is... what on earth..."

Roxy smiled and reached out to my hand, which was trembling due to me having experienced the phenomenon that supposedly impossible.

"Now, let's go back to Babylon."

I couldn't forget that look on Roxy's face from back then. Back when I was still just a simple gatekeeper. Helping me who had just been attacked by Rafal of Burix, extending her hand to me... Right now she had the same look as that time.

This made me aware of one thing.

I see now... I told myself that I want to help her, but in reality it was me who wished to be saved just the way she did to me before.

I wanted someone to save me from the helplessness I felt from having the Gluttony skill.

Why... did I pretend to not notice such a simple thing? Had I gone too far?

Accepting Roxy's hand, I could feel it deep inside my heart. From that point on, I wouldn't lie to her about what I felt anymore.

◊ ◊ ◊

Luna's voice could be heard.

[You've found it, your pillar.....]

When I wanted to ask what she meant, I found myself laying on the bed. Apparently, I was sleeping.

This was the room I'd come to feel familiar with. It's the room of the inn where I've stayed at ever since I arrived in Babylon.

I fell to the left when I tried to wake up.

Right... I lost my left arm during my fight against Norden—Envy's puppet. When I looked at it, the stump had been bandaged neatly.

It was from the situation earlier, Roxy must be the one who had done this.

I looked around the room and saw no one else. Then I turned to see the clock to check what time it is.

“Eleven o'clock...?”

It seemed that more than a day had passed since then. And then, I noticed that he's not here.

Greed is not here! Where is that cocky bastard ‘this me’ go!?

I desperate looked around, fearing that he might still lying around in Gallia... just when I started to turn pale, someone knocked on the door...

The blue haired Eris and the white haired Myne entered the room. Somehow... I felt pressured by the presence of those two mortal sin skill holders.

“Hi, it seems that you just woke up.”

“It's been a week, since you slept”

Wait what!? I actually slept for a whole week after that fight. I guess it couldn't be helped, considering that I was dying at that time.

Meanwhile, I noticed the black staff in Eris' hand.

“Greed!?”

“Yeah, I had to retrieve it back from Gallia. After that battle, Myne seemed to forget to bring him back with her.”

Eris gave Myne a sideway glance, while the girl in question is looking elsewhere.

She sighed at this scene.

“Moreover, it seemed that a monster took him by accident, making it hard for me to find him, until I came across it around the vicinity of the center part of Gallia.”

She glared once more at Myne, but was ignored. Although it appeared that Myne is just acting like the usual Myne... I could sense the incompatibility between the two. I just hope that they don't start a fight here.

Since I'm not on tip top shape yet, I might ended sleeping for another week.

Nervously, I received the staff from Eris.

This is the shape of the fourth form. Like this, it feels different from all other forms when I held it in my hand. It's like a decoration, something you won't bring to a battle.

Greed immediately jabbed at me through the [Mind Reading] while I was examining him.

[FFFFaaaaaaaaaaaaatee! You, you made me feel worried.]

“Don't be mad, I survived thanks to that.”

Greed then started a very long sermon for the mistake I did. I felt like something was squirming out of my ears.

And, when it ended,

[A monster took me and brought me along with it travelling a very long way. I thought that I'd never get back here.]

“I can see that.”

[...anyways, there is something important that Fate need to know. It will be better if Eris follow up from here.]

Greed urged me to ask Eris with a serious voice.

Seeing that as a cue, Eris laughed and smiled

“You have defeated Tenryu, showing us your proof. I think it’s not the time yet, but now we can’t continue with the plan of creating crown tier human by using Roxy’s death, since we need your strength. Please, lend us your power”

“What is this about?”

“Apparently you have no right to decline. It’s something that can’t be avoided as a Mortal Sin skill holder. But first, since it will be inconvenient for you, let’s restore your lost arm.”

Eh, you can actually do such thing!? There should be no recovery type magic in this world... and moreover, you said you can even make a lost body part to regrow?

“It’s possible. And you should leave from here before Roxy comes. You’ll just endanger her if you are to meet her now.”

Why... why was it when I heard Roxy’s name, the gluttony skill reacted violently... as if it resented her.

Myne who had been silent the whole time suddenly open her mouth.

“This is... your trademark.”

What I received from Myne was the skull mask that was supposedly broken during the fight against Tenryu. No... I don’t remember considering this as my trademark.

I put on the skull mask. But before I left my room, I left behind a letter.

Originally, it’s something I should’ve said directly, but I think I won’t be able to meet her for a while.

And that’s why, I wrote everything that I wanted to say to Roxy on that letter.

Author's note:

This concludes Chapter 3.

Through Chapters 1 to 3, as the big goal for the Tenryu battle is over,

This feels like a part of the story just finished. This is also thanks to everyone's support.

From chapter 4, new enemies, new forces, new developments will appear!?

I will proceed after taking a short break, thank you for your support!



PtFF by: traktorA7EN